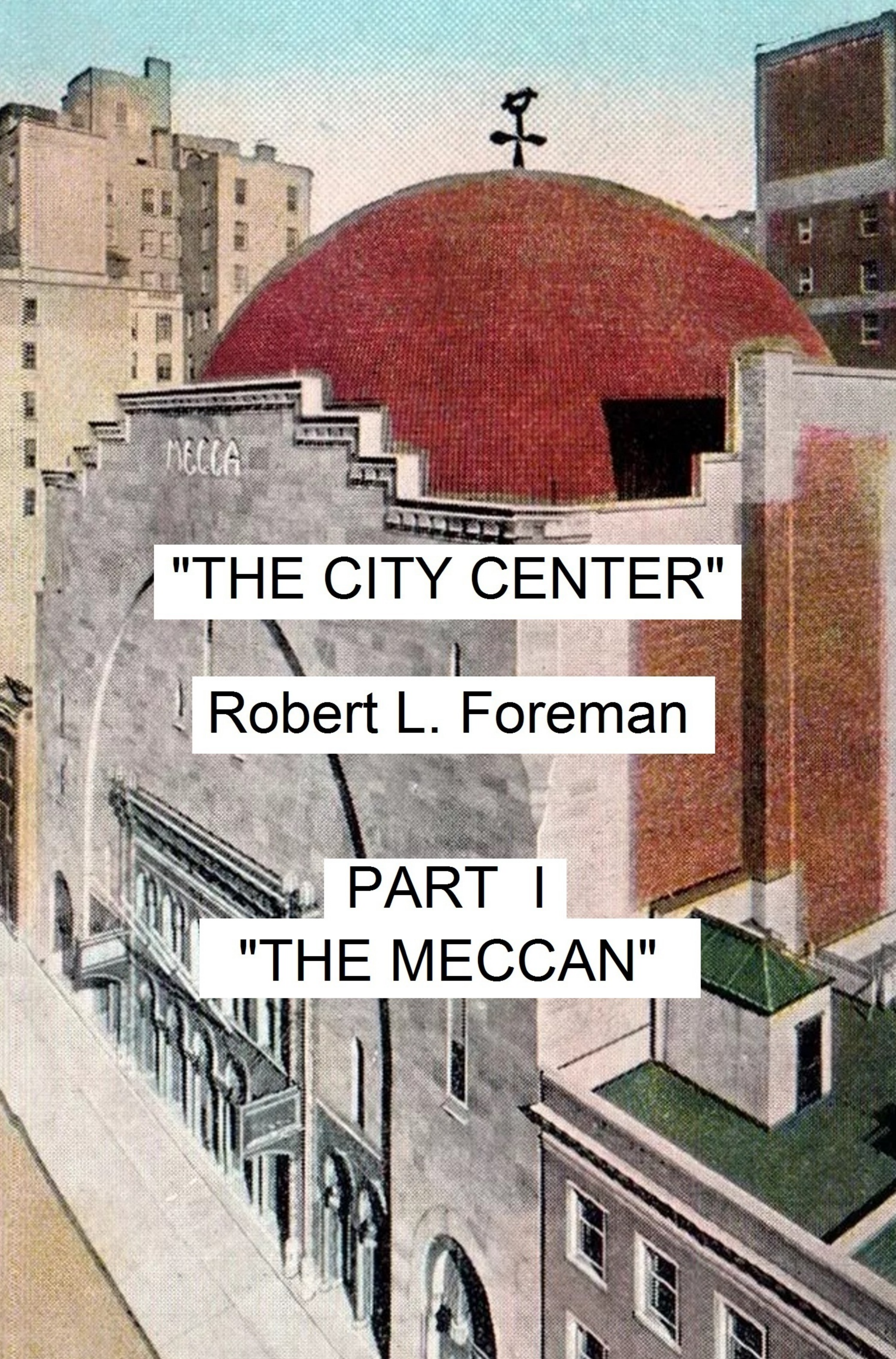


"THE CITY CENTER"

Robert L. Foreman

PART I

"THE MECCAN"

ROBERT LANGDON FOREMAN

November 17, 1981

Margaret Wood
55th St. Dance Theatre
Foundation
130 W. 56th St.
New York, N.Y. 10019

Dear Margaret,

it was a pleasure meeting you at the recent "Satyagraha" benefit gala at BAM. Again I commend you on your fine work at City Center.

Prompted by our conversation, I did a bit of research into the history of City Center. New York's Mecca Temple (as it was originally known) was featured in the February 25, 1925 issue of "The American Architect." The story contains not only interior and exterior photographs of the new mosque, but plan and detail drawings. Additional information and photos of Mecca, designed by H.P. Knowles, can undoubtedly be found in issues of "The Meccan," the New York Shriners' magazine published from 1917 until 1950.

For a nominal fee and photostating expenses, I would be glad to delve further into the theatre's history, as well as provide your office with copies of the photographs. If you are interested, please don't hesitate to call.

Sincerely,

Bob

Bob Foreman

Production office
BAM
30 Lafayette Ave.
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11217
636-4146

Lawsanne Kratz
called 11-18
OK to proceed

Telephone
212/247/0430

55TH STREET DANCE THEATER FOUNDATION, INC★AT CITY CENTER

130 W. 56th St.
New York NY 10019

Board of Directors
Howard M. Squadron,
Chairman
Justin Colin
Jerome L. Greene
David D. Holbrook
Perry J. Lewis
Alton G. Marshall
Martin J. Oppenheimer
Stanley Plesent
Richard A. Sarazen
Donna Shalala
Peter Sharp
Mrs. Howard Sloan

Margaret Wood
Executive Director

LETTER OF AGREEMENT

between 55th Street Dance Theater Foundation, Inc.
130 West 56th Street
New York, NY 10019

and Robert L. Foreman
c/o Production
Brooklyn Academy of Music
30 Lafayette Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11217

re: City Center research project

Robert L. Foreman agrees to research, locate, photostat, compile, index, and deliver by January 1, 1982 to the 55th Street Dance Theater Foundation, Inc. a collection of newspaper and magazine articles concerning the construction and early history of the City Center, including, but not limited to, the following materials:

1. The American Architect, 1925.

2. The Meccan, 1923-1925

3. The New York Times, 1923-1944

4. Various metropolitan dailies, 1923-1925

Robert L. Foreman agrees further to determine the location of the original blueprints, should they exist.

It is mutually agreed that, upon receipt of the above mentioned materials, said materials will become the exclusive property of the 55th Street Dance Theater Foundation, Inc.

The 55th Street Dance Theater Foundation, Inc. agrees to pay Robert L. Foreman a fee of Three Hundred and Fifty ($350.00) Dollars for these materials. Payments shall be made in two equal parts, the first upon the signing of this agreement, the second upon the submission of the completed project and the acceptance of the 55th Street Dance Theater Foundation, Inc. thereof.

AGREED AND ACCEPTED:

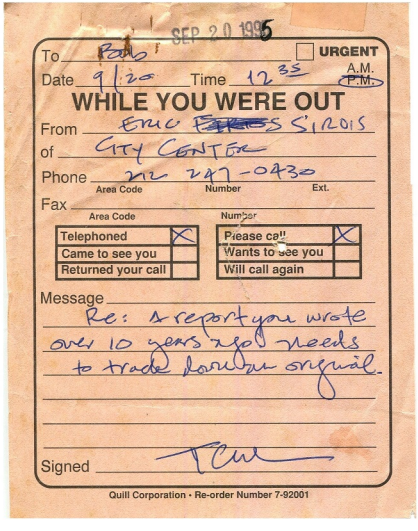
Robert L. Foreman

Date: 12/14/81

AGREED AND ACCEPTED:

55th Street Dance Theater Foundation, Inc.

QUEENS THEATRE IN THE PARK



SEP 20 1995

To Barb ☐ URGENT

Date 9/20 Time 12 35 A.M. P.M.

WHILE YOU WERE OUT

From ERIC [redacted] STROIS

of CITY CENTER

Phone 212 247-0430
Area Code Number Ext.

Fax
Area Code Number

Telephoned	X	Please call	X
Came to see you		Wants to see you	
Returned your call		Will call again	

Message
Re: A report you wrote
over 10 years ago needs
to trade for our original.

Signed

Quill Corporation • Re-order Number 7-92001

CITY CENTER

October 3, 1995

Mr. Robert Foreman
Queens Theatre
in the Park
P.O. Box 520069
Flushing, NY 11352

Dear Mr. Foreman:

Thank you so much for helping us recover the complete set of this document. I was not around when you wrote this report for City Center, and now I find it very interesting to read. It is definitely an extremely valuable piece of work to us.

I have enclosed the pages that I found to be missing from your copy. I hope they bring your copy up to date as well, and that we will not have to be calling on you ten years from now to get another copy. I have made sure it is in a very safe place this time.

Again, thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Eric L. Sirois
Assistant to the Sr. V.P. and Managing Director

Administrative Offices: 130 West 56th Street • New York, NY 10019 • (212) 247-0430 • Fax (212) 246-9778
Entrance to Theaters: West 55th Street (between 6th and 7th) • Ticket Information: CityTix (212) 581-1212 • Fax (212) 541-7979

Board of Directors: Howard M. Squadron (Chairman) Judith E. Daykin (Executive Director) Elaine Malsin (Vice Chairman) Alec Baldwin
William H. Hayden Richard V. Hopple Raymond A. Lamontagne James Anson Lash Philip Laskawy Peter K. Loeb Bernard L. Madoff
Elizabeth I. McCann Laura Pels Stanley Plesent Richard A. Sarazen Mrs. Irving Schneider Dolores Wharton Mrs. Fred Wilpon
Joanne Woodward Harvey Horowitz (Counsel) Schuyler G. Chapin (Commissioner, City of New York Department of Cultural Affairs)
City Center 55th Street Theater Foundation, Inc.

THE CITY CENTER

New York, New York

A compilation of newspaper and magazine articles tracing the history of the building from 1921 to 1944

Prepared for the 55th Street Dance Theatre Foundation

December, 1981

Robert L. Foreman

INDEX OF MATERIAL

Date	Source	Title	Synopsis
12-25-21	New York Times	"Shriners Here Plan $2,000,000 Mosque"	Property purchase; financing plans
1-2-23	New York Herald	Obituaries	Death of architect, Harry P. Knowles 1-1-23
1-3-23	New York Times	Obituaries	Death of architect
8-23	The Meccan	"Mecca Creeping Skyward"	Steel framing erected; description of building & illus. of site
10-23	The Meccan	"Mecca's Most Brilliant Event"	descript. of laying of cornerstone 10-13-23
10-14-23	New York Times	"Shriners at Site of New Mosque"	descript. of cørner-stone ceremony 10-13-23
10-23	The Meccan	Illustration	architect's rendering
11-23	The Meccan	"Monster Girder is Set"	Descript. of installa-tion of baclony truss girder 11-6-23
7-24	The Meccan	"Mosque Nears Completion"	Roof completed; lodge rooms open; plea for $
9-24	The Meccan	"The Mosque Takes Shape"	Partial plaster work complete; auditorium decor discussed
10-24	The Meccan	"Looks Like a December Ceremonial"	Scaffolding down; work on stage; organ, proj. booth described
12-24	The Meccan	"The Day of Days Is December 29"	Details of program planned for opening
12-24	The Meccan	Illustration	Advertisement of opening
12-24	The Meccan	"Dedicatory Services to Be Broadcast"	Opening to be heard on WNYC Radio
12-29-24	New York Journal*	"5,000 Shriners Here To Dedicate Mosque"	Details of events planned for opening 12-29
12-30-24	New York Herald-Tribune	"3,000 Shriners Help Dedicate Mecca Mosque"	Coverage of opening 12-29-24

*Front page of Journal, 12-29-24, including this story in front flap of book.

Date	Source	Title	Synopsis
12-30-24	New York Times	"Shriners Dedicate Mecca's New Home"	Coverage of opening 12-29-24
2-25-25	The American Architect	"Mecca Temple,New York"	Brief description of building; twelve illus and two plans
2-25-25	The American Architect	"Structural Steel Framing of The Mecca Temple, New York"	Description of framing and mechanical apsects of construction; 7 ill strations & 4 plans
1-10-41	New York Times	"Blitzstein Opera In a Censor Row"	Production at Mosque cancelled by City, citing loose seats
8-13-41	New York Times	"Opera at Mecca Temple"	Proposal by Max Rabinoff to produce opera at Mosque
9-2-42	New York Times	"Mecca Temple Bid In By The City on Lien"	Mosque taken over by City for failure to pa taxes, 9-1-42
3-6-43	New York Times	"Plan Music Center at Mecca Temple"	Council President Morr Mayor LaGuardia annou plan for City Center
7-22-43	New York TIMES	"New Group to Give Opera, Plays Here"	Organization for Cit Center announced
8-13-43	New York TIMES	"Hart Says Inquiry Will Cost Nothing"	$65,000 appropriated to repair Mosque
9-13-43	New York TIMES	"Jersey Man Heads City Music Center"	Harry Friedgut app't. head of Cit Center
9-24-43	New York TIMES	"Music Center Gets a Revocable Permit"	City awards Center Occupancy permit
10-20-43	New York TIMES	"City Music Center Is Named"	Mecca Temple becomes "New York City Center"
12-7-43	New York TIMES	"CityVenture In Show Business Evokes Protests on Broadway"	League of N.Y. Theatres protest low ticket fees at Cen
11-30-43	New York TIMES	"City Music Center Opens Ticket Drive"	Discount subscription offered for season

CONTINUED ON INSIDE BACK PAGE

Date	Source	Title	Synopsis
12-12-43	New York TIMES	"City Center Opens"	Discussion of upcoming season
-9-44	New York TIMES	"Plan For A New City Center"	Descript. of future new bldg. at 59th St.
10-21-44	New York TIMES	"Factories to Rise On The West Side"	Center requests funds to remodel banquet hall
-22-44	New York TIMES	"City Set Up Fund For Storm Damage"	Center given $30,000 for improvements to tenant spaces
-24-44	New York TIMES	"City Center Reports $844 Profit During First Year Of Operation"	LaGuardia discusses first Center season, 'not an experiment'
-12-44	New York TIMES Magazine	"A New Audience and A New Theatre"	Feature article discusses success of first season, bldg. renovations, acoustics

CITY CENTER : IMPORTANT DATES

December, 1921	Plans to build announced
January 1, 1923	Architect, Harry P. Knowles, dies
summer, 1923	Construction of office bldg. commences
October 13, 1923	Cornerstone layed in theatre building
December 29, 1924	Building completed; dedication ceremony held
1940	Building given up by Shriners
september 1, 1941	City takes ownership of building
July 21, 1943	City Center of Music and Drama, Inc. formed
December 11, 1943	City Center officially opens with Artur Rodzinski and the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra
December 13, 1943	First City Center season begins with "Susan and God" starring Gertrude Lawrence

ec. 25, 1921

RINERS HERE PLAN $2,000,000 MOSQUE

ca Temple Pays $400,000 Plot in West 55th Street— ilding to Cost $1,500,000.

E LARGEST IN COUNTRY

0 to Dedicate Structure the t of Next Year at Fiftieth Anniversary—Issue Bonds.

Oriental mosque, costing $1,500,000, following closely the Arabic de- which are emphasized in the le Order of the Mystic Shrine, is to be built in New York City by Temple, which yesterday pur- the site for the unique structure West Fifty-fifth Street. The prop- 100 by 200 feet, now covered by a tory and a three-story building, sold by Yale University, through Kelsey, President of the Title ntee and Trust Company. The deration was $400,000. The plot ex- through from West Fifty-fifth to 131 West Fifty-sixth Street.

site chosen for the elaborate tem- the local organization of Shriners ently been used as a moving pic- ndio by the Famous Players- Corporation. The old buildings e razed to make room for the which is to be of the finest as befits the mother of all of the Ancient Arabic Order Nobles of the Mystic Shrine. cost of the plot, the new home Shriners of Mecca Temple will them nearly two million dollars, will represent one of the most ex- as well as one of the most strik- orks of architecture ever erected country for the exclusive use of rnal order.

that the site has been acquired, planned to begin work at once on osque, which is to be completed mened in connection with the celebrating the fiftieth anniver- of the order, to be held in this city after part of 1922, when 12,000 rep- ntives of the 160 Temples in North ica, including Canadians and Mex- are expected to be present and through the streets of New York their picturesque Oriental cos-

consummation of the real estate terday was the occasion of a celebration in the evening by nt Shriners at Mecca Temple in sty-fifth Street, where the de- the undertaking were explained ds N. Donnatin, Recorder of the

ginally we had planned to com- new home for Mecca Temple office building, so that the ex- might be partly defrayed by explained Mr. Donnatin. "But now find that our finances are in nt shape, as is indicated by the that our surplus is $75,000 in excess of last year, and we feel that we an organization that can carry out ndertaking.

ave Nearly $1,000,000 on Hand.

e have nearly $1,000,000, and what onal funds we may need we will through the Mecca Temple Holding pany, recently organized to do the writing. The holding company will additional funds by selling bonds members of the Mecca Temple. ve 11,080 members, an is ap- that the cost of the mosque when ted among this number represents nificant sum. However, we can- nt every member to furnish his share of the cost.

are going to build a mosque with- help from any other temple. ly an affair for the local or- and Mecca Temple will take the fact that it alone built the

mitted [illegible] lects [illegible] we [illegible] exact plan [illegible] has been [illegible] of our [illegible] all temples [illegible]

"Our great [illegible] comparatively limited number of plots offered. We must build for the future. It has been [illegible] that the original plans [illegible] small by the time that the building was completed.

"Take [illegible] Mosque in Fifty-sixth for instance. At the time [illegible] was started [illegible] would meet all requirements [illegible] to come. [illegible] three months ago the Trustees [illegible] an additional plot [illegible] purpose of [illegible] will not be [illegible] torium, but [illegible] standing room [illegible] not [illegible] itself [illegible] with her [illegible] worse condition. They cannot [illegible]

Provide [illegible]

"We do not [illegible] error, and this is [illegible] magnitude [illegible] an auditorium [illegible] mands of [illegible] not only [illegible] capacity [illegible] rooms, a [illegible] executive [illegible] ited number of rooms [illegible] Shriners.

Mecca Temple is at present [illegible] an old [illegible] 107 West Fifty-fifth Street [illegible] Broadway and Sixth avenue [illegible] converted for the purposes of the [illegible] der. On the ground floor [illegible] grill, on the second [illegible] mitte room, on the third floor [illegible] tive [illegible] assembly [illegible] itself of Cassia Hall [illegible] torium, and the second [illegible] do is [illegible] further [illegible]

The [illegible] raise the [illegible] the [illegible] in [illegible] $1,000 [illegible] Company [illegible] Hobbs [illegible]

Mecca [illegible] fifty years [illegible] old [illegible] from [illegible] Temple [illegible] Sixth [illegible] quin's [illegible] on the [illegible] there [illegible] is [illegible] devoted [illegible] worthy [illegible]

New York HERALD
Jan. 2, 1923

HARRY P. KNOWLES, 32, DIES.

Architect Was Well Known Designer of Masonic Structures.

Harry P. Knowles, aged 32, an architect, died yesterday at the French Hospital following an operation for appendicitis. The body was taken to his home in the Apthorp apartments, Broadway and Seventy-eighth street. He was the architect for the Masonic Temple in West Twenty-fourth street, for the new Masonic Hospital recently [illegible] structed in Utica and had [illegible] the plans for the new Shrine Temple to be built on the block bounded by Sixth and Seventh avenues and Fifty-fifth and Fifty-sixth streets. He was a Thirty-second Degree Mason and a member of Pyramid Lodge, No. [illegible]

He was born in Hamilton, Ont., coming to New York thirty-two years ago. He is survived by his wife, Mrs. Esther McDonald Knowles, a daughter, Esther Jeanette Knowles, and his mother, Mrs. Harry Knowles of Ontario.

New York TIMES
Jan. 3, 1923

ven, Conn., on Thursday afternoon at 2:30 o'clock.

KNOWLES—On Monday, Jan. 1, 1923, after a short illness, Harry P. Knowles of the Apthorp Apartments, Broadway and 78th St. Funeral service in the Grand Lodge Room, Masonic Hall, 23d St. and 6th Av., New York City, on Thursday, Jan. 4, 1923, at 1 P. M. Hamilton (Ontario, Can.) papers please copy.

KNOWLES—Brethren of Pyramid Lodge No. 490, F. and A. M. You are hereby summoned to attend an emergent communication of the lodge for the purpose of paying the last tribute of respect to our late brother, [illegible] W. Harry P. Knowles at Grand Lodge Room, Masonic Hall, 23d St., on Tuesday afternoon, Jan. 4, at 1 o'clock. Brethren will assemble in the Renaissance Room not later than 2:30.

DE WITT C. WABLE, Master.
GEORGE R. HIVING, Secretary.

EXCERPTS FROM "THE MECCAN" 1923-1925

EPES W. SARGENT, *Editor* LOUIS N. DONNATIN, *Business Manager*

Address all communications to LOUIS N. DONNATIN
Mecca Temple Headquarters 107 West 45th Street, New York, N. Y.

Published monthly by Mecca Temple, A.A.O.N.M.S., Oasis of New York, and distributed gratis to its members and others entitled through courtesy to receive the same

COURTESY NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY

Mecca Creeping Skyward

New Mosque is Rising Rapidly and Steel on the Lodge and Club Room Section is Nearly Completed

YOU'VE all heard the story of the stubborn cuss who looked at his first elephant and still declared there couldn't be any such animal. Lots of Meccans still seem to think that we are not going to build a Mosque. We know, because we have heard them say it.

If you don't believe it, hike up to Fifty-fifth Street some day and give the place the once over. That's what the editor did the other morning, and he was surprised to find such good progress made.

Past Potentate Harry C. Arthur was on the job, representing the Holding Company, and we found him hanging over the bridge at the Fifty-fifth Street side, watching the concrete gang. It was a splendid viewpoint for an illustrated lecture, and Harry had all the pointers.

By the time this gets into print the probabilities are that the steel will be coming in for the auditorium, but the other day, August 8, to be exact, there was only the concrete gang in the excavation, and the open space permitted a clear view of the back building.

The construction work is in three parts, the lodge and club room section, facing on Fifty-sixth Street, the stage section and the auditorium. It is all one building, of course, but for the purposes of the builders, these are three separate units, and the rear section was the first to be given the steel.

This is because there was less excavating to be done on this side, and the foundation was ready before the heavy drilling was completed on the deeper spaces on the south side. For this reason the steel for that section was contracted for earlier delivery, and the first seven floors were fireproofed before they even got the derricks on the job for the other sections. The result is that a better idea can be had of the general plan than if all sections were at the same stage of construction. You can study that section without reference to the rest.

This section rests entirely back of the stage, and is separated from it by a heavy fire wall. At the west end is a ramp leading to the stage which will permit automobiles or animals to be taken directly to the stage on an incline instead of by elevator. At the east is provision for the fire alley from the auditorium.

The lower floors will be given over to property rooms, rooms for the patrol, band and directors, and dressing rooms, all opening on the stage directly or by galleries, according to the elevation.

The next three double stories will be given over to as many lodge rooms, each with a mezzanine. Each lodge room, with its necessary apartments, will be self-contained and can be closely tyled by one man. They will represent the last word in lodge and chapter room construction and contain all of the most modern conveniences.

The upper floors will be planned as a club, with all facilities, and on the top floor will be the executive offices, with a special room for the Potentate, general offices, and committee rooms.

Below the stage level are the engine rooms for the elevators, ventilators and other machinery.

In front of this comes the stage section. The stage proper will be 45 feet deep and have a proscenium opening of 66 feet in the clear; that is, from one side of the arch to the other. The actual stage will be wider.

There will be dressing rooms on either side of the stage, and a "headroom" sufficient to care for the most elaborate settings. This section will not rise as high as the lodge and club room section, but the roof will be level with that of the auditorium. Large ventilators, forming a part of the general ventilation system, will permit the stage to be cleared of smoke in case of fire, and keep it out of the auditorium.

This is required in all modern theatres, but the builders have exceeded the requirements of the fire laws in their ample openings, for it will be recalled that provision is being made to clear the auditorium of smoke so that smoking can be permitted during the proper sections of a ceremonial. This was one of the reasons why we left Carnegie Hall for the Armory.

Below the stage is what is technically known as the "trap room." This extends the full width and depth of the stage, and is clear save for a well in the center, now visible between two walls of native rock.

In this will run an elevator which will permit the lowering of the heaviest automobile truck to the level of the banquet hall, well below the level of the trap room.

The Mosque is being planned to meet *any* demand that may be made upon it. It is not merely a place for ceremonials, but is planned for use as a show hall, and it may be that an automobile show may be held here, in which case the cars can be lowered to the banquet hall. It will also aid in the presentation of huge spectacles, and facilitate the handling of the stunts, which can be made ready in the trap room and at the proper time run up to the stage. The ramp to the street and this elevator will simplify the handling of material in any part of the building, for it will also communicate with the kitchens, though these have a separate entrance for supplies.

In front of the stage is, of course, the auditorium, which will provide seating accommodation for about five thousand persons on the floor and galleries. The main floor alone will seat 1,350, which exceeds the total capacity of many Broadway theatres.

Below the auditorium will be the supper room, 100 feet deep and 140 feet wide, and with room at the tables for 1,000 persons. With buffet service, the number capable of being served will be trebled.

This room occupies all but 10 feet of the width of the Fifty-fifth Street side of the lot. This is reserved for seat and table storage, and the entire banquet floor can be stripped of tables and chairs in a few minutes and safely stored. On this end there will be two floors, but the banquet room proper will be the equivalent of two stories high. There will be ample check room facilities on two floors, but these will be under the sidewalk and will not take from the space.

Entrance will be from the Fifty-fifth Street side and there will be board stairways in addition to elevator service.

The main floor level is slightly above the level of the street, and the doors will open on landings of from one to three steps, according to the location, the street making a sharp decline from Seventh to Sixth Avenue. There will be two box offices, as well as provision for passage through a side corridor, and entrance will be had directly into the auditorium, no room being wasted upon a front foyer, the side corridor serving this purpose. Ramps as well as stairways and elevators will lead to the first balcony, which sweeps well into the auditorium, but not so far as to interfere with the sight lines of the rear seats.

Virtually there will be four galleries, but in the proper acceptance only two, since these balconies join in pairs. The upper balcony will not be so low as to shut off the view of those in the first tier.

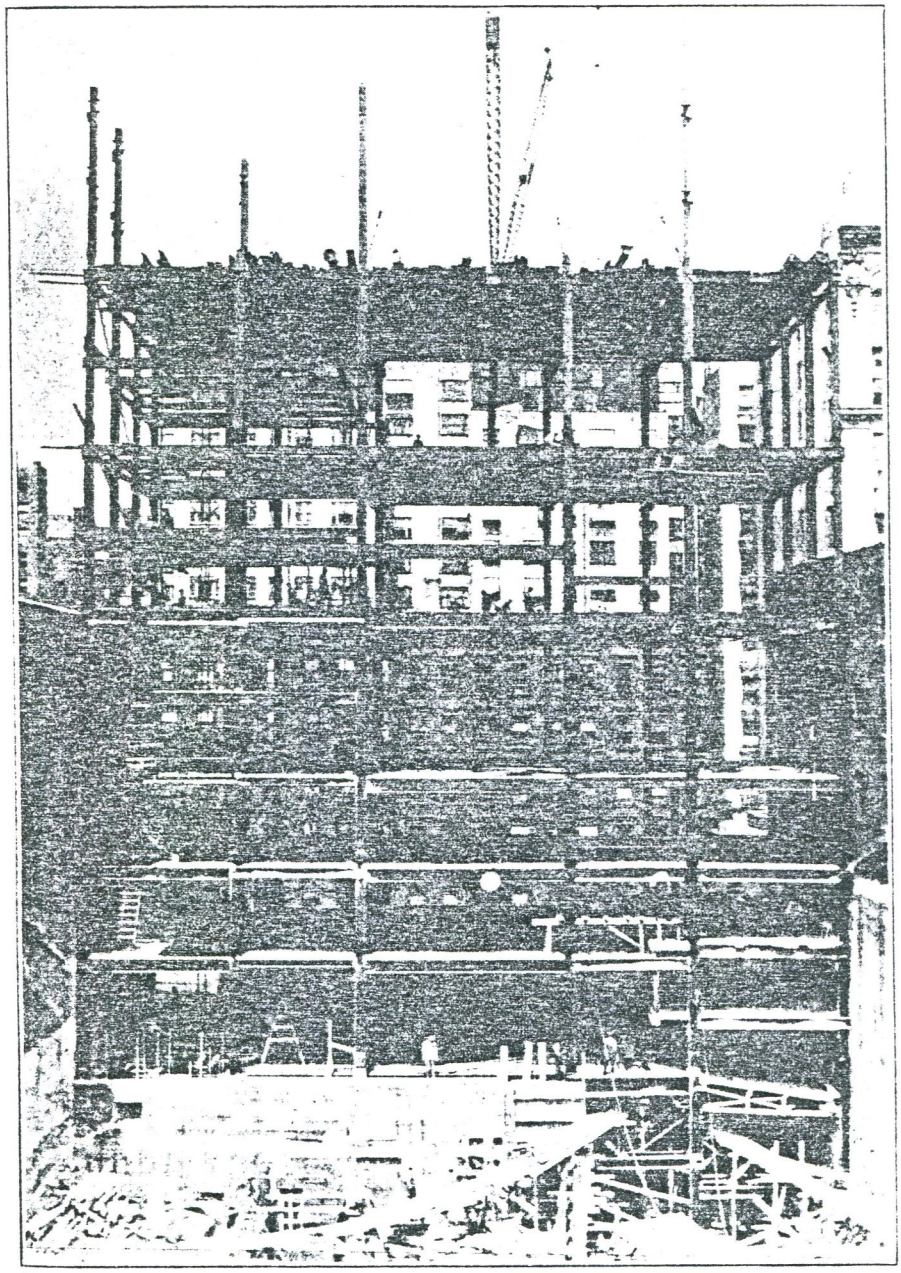
The roof of the auditorium will be level with that of the stage, but from this will rise a dome of Spanish tiling, giving a rich and colorful effect. This is not the dome shown in the tentative sketch, but is more simply planned, not only to reduce building costs, but to provide for a safer construction, substituting the solidity of the arch for the more fanciful and less stable structure originally suggested.

It will be more in keeping with the shell material, which will employ stone and terra cotta in a design that will make the Mosque a Mecca for all architects and builders.

This is the first opportunity this writer has had to study the detailed plans as finally accepted, and he confesses to a pleased surprise. The original plans called for lodge rooms on the Fifty-fifth Street side, with the auditorium entrance on Fifty-sixth Street. In reverse the plan works out to make a far more economical disposition of the space and to give greater convenience, as well. It is evident that the Holding Company is well guided in its deliberations.

Once the foundation piers are set and the steel for the sections comes on the ground, the frame work will rise quickly, and the work will be watched with interest by all interested in building. Two of the roof columns or trusses will weight 70 tons each, but these will be built up of lesser parts, so that the unit members may be more easily handled, but the main gallery girder will be one of the largest single pieces of steel in the city, being 90 feet wide and 9 feet high, with a total weight of about 60 tons. This is one solid piece of steel and Harry Arthur is planning to invite the engineer members of Mecca Temple to come and see it put into place.

Harry, as has been said, is representative of the Holding Company on the ground, and he is an ideal man for the job, for his unflagging good humor and genuine good fellowship keeps the men on the job right up to the last notch of efficiency, and they are working together with a singleness of purpose that is not only expediting the work but ensuring a perfect job.



Photograph by Noble William G. Kelly.

How the Mosque Site Looked August 1

Compare this with the picture on the front page and you will realize that things are booming along. The steel was only up to the lodge room floors when this picture was made.

Noble Wm. R. Coppage, of Mecca Temple, the superintendent of steel construction, is shooting the 2,800 tons of steel skyward so fast that it seems to rival the famous beanstalk, and Robert Dunn, the general superintendent for the contractors, James Stewart & Co., is a member of Crescent Temple. James Jensen, the civil engineer, is a Craft Mason and the other chaps are good Masonic material though they have not, as yet, traveled the road we all have traversed.

The other chiefs on the job at present are Frank De Wan, chief clerk; James Ellis, material clerk; Fred Wyss, carpenter foreman; M. Flaherty, labor foreman; Clarence (Home Brew) Degnon, mixer engineer, and M. (Owl) Mitchell, the stripper. It's a crew to be proud of, and Harry is as proud of them as though he made them himself.

There is organization on the job. The men work with a directness that avoids lost motion. There are none standing around waiting for something to turn up. Their work is laid out and in the words of Noble Coppage, they aim to "keep her going." Speed does not come before thorough work, but all the speed consistent with safety is being shown.

This type of building takes longer to construct than the office building, because the steel of the auditorium represents a nicer problem in adjustment than the straight girder work of the four-sided office structure. It will be slower, but the progress will be just as rapid as skilled labor can make it, while retaining the margin of safety.

If every noble of Mecca Temple could get up to the lot, we believe that the bond issue would be over-subscribed right now, for it is not possible to see the work being done and not come away filled with renewed confidence in the Holding Company and its methods.

We wish that every Meccan might make this trip, for the bonds are selling slowly, too slowly. The work will presently need more funds and it should not be delayed for a lack of money. If you cannot get up, take our word for it and shoot in another subscription. Back up the men who are giving their time free to the completion of this great work. Show that you are appreciative of their efforts with something more than words. Help put it over, and presently when you form one of the crowd at the dedication you will not have to hang your head in shame at the thought that you did not do your bit.

We do not believe that there is a single member of Mecca Temple who cannot afford to take up at least one $100 bond, and yet the records show that a large percentage of our membership have made no purchase, and it takes something more than three rousing cheers to build in stone and steel.

Come out of your shell and subscribe. You found you could do it when the Liberty Bonds were in the market. You can do it for the sake of Mother Mecca if you want to. Come across.

Have You Done Your Duty?

Are you going to strut around with your fez over one ear when we lay the cornerstone knowing that you have done your bit toward helping rear the wonderful structure that will be the home of the Mother of All Shrines, or will you be one of the fellows who didn't kick in? Too many of you have failed to kick in up to date. Come across—BIG. We must have your help; everyone's help.

BUY BONDS SELL BONDS BOOM BONDS

Mecca's Most Brilliant Event

Corner-stone Ceremonies Startle New Yorkers with a Miniature of the Washington Parade

MECCA TEMPLE'S most brilliant outdoor event has passed into history. In presence of the Imperial Potentate, Conrad V. Dykeman, Past Imperial Potentate and impending Mayor of Philadelphia, W. Freeland Kendrick, a score or more of past and present Potentates and several thousand of the Nobility, the Honorable and Most Worshipful Arthur S. Tompkins, Grand Master of Masons in the State of New York, with the assistance of his Grand Lodge officers, set into place the corner-stone of the new Mosque of Mecca Temple on the afternoon of October 13th, in ample form. The ceremonies were simple, but impressive, but the parade which preceded it was one of the most colorful that ever passed through the streets of the metropolis and Mecca Temple has added a new and scintillating ray to the halo of glory that is hers. The event was a success from every angle, from every point of view. It will give non-fraternal New York something to talk and think about until the greater glory of the dedicatory exercises sets a new standard.

Although the morning was not promising, Mecca Luck held, and it was a perfect afternoon when the Marshal, Col. Walter A. De Lamater, our High Priest and Prophet, swung into Fifth Avenue at Forty-fifth Street at the head of his aides, selected from the officers of the Seventy-first Regiment, N. G. N. Y., and comprising Lieut. Col. Eben, Major Kuehnle, Major Robertson, Capt. Buckley and Lieuts. MacFarlane and Weiler.

Directly behind him came the splendid Lulu Temple Band, directed by "Doc." Thomas from an automobile and heading a delegation of 750 of the Nobility of Lulu, including all of the units and a generous representation of just members, headed by their Potentate, Past Imperial Potentate W. Freeland Kendrick, with his Rabbans, Charles Grakelow and Al Ladner, supporting him.

Back of them came the units of Salaam, with their mounted guard in full force and directly behind were the units of Kismet Temple, Mecca bringing up the rear, with the band, Patrol, Directors and a fair representation of the Nobility. Ross Cox, Chief Rabban, led the line in the absence of the Potentate, whose duties called him to welcome our guests at the Hotel McAlpin, our guest headquarters, and it's a question which stepped highest, Ross or Col. De Lamater's horse.

The line of march was down Fifth Avenue to Thirty-fourth Street, through Thirty-fourth to Broadway, where we picked up the automobiles containing the guests of honor in front of the McAlpin, up Broadway to Fifty-fifth Street, to Sixth Avenue and back through Fifty-sixth Street to the rear of the building, where a platform had been erected for the ceremonies.

The street was packed from avenue to avenue when the Mecca Band, on the platform led the massed bands just below in a rendition of the National Anthem with more than 300 players swelling the volume of melody.

Potentate Arthur H. Diamant, in a few well chosen words, made the Nobility welcome and spoke of the realization of our long-cherished hopes for a Mosque that would not only fittingly represent Mecca Temple, but the far-flung Order which had sprung from the efforts of the thirteen men who fifty-one years ago had builded far more wisely than they knew.

He gave place to the Imperial Potentate, who briefly congratulated Mecca Temple upon the structure she was rearing and spoke of the wonderful growth of the Order.

Past Imperial Potentate Kendrick was the next speaker, and he caught the crowd with his glowing personality and adroit remarks, commenting upon the spirit of patriotism he had observed as he marched through the lines of spectators, most of whom saluted the national standard as it passed, and dwelling upon the large proportion who still observe this custom which before the war was more honored in the breach than the observance.

Then the Imperial Potentate presented to the Grand Master a suitably engraved silver trowel as a memento of the ceremony, which Judge Tompkins accepted in a few courteous words, and the ritual was entered upon with that nice precision which marks the work of the New York Grand Lodge.

Under modern steel construction it does

not matter importantly what part of the building is put up first, and the facing of pressed brick on a foundation of sandstone had already been run several stories into the air, but a space had been left for the corner-stone, with a niche for the reception of the copper box in which had been sealed the usual coins, copies of the New York papers, a list of the Divan of 1923, a roster of the Holding Company, a roster of the Grand Lodge, membership badges, portraits of the thirteen founders, a copy of the September Meccan and a photograph of the late Noble Warren G. Harding.

CONTENTS OF BOX

United States Flag; photograph of President Warren G. Harding; photographs of thirteen (13) charter members of Mecca Temple; Roster, officers Mecca Temple, 1923; Roster, Mecca Temple Holding Company, Inc.; formal invitation to guests attending this ceremony; order of exercises, laying of Corner-stone; Grand Lodge Free & Accepted Masons of the State of New York; copy of program; program of the parade; The Meccan, issue September, 1923; newspaper clippings from the *Evening World* and *Evening Telegram*, Wednesday, October 10, 1923; Mecca Temple Officer's Jewel and Ribbon; Mecca Fez; Mecca Temple emblem; United States coins; copy New York *Herald*, Saturday, October 13, 1923.

After the box had been deposited, the Grand Master spread the cement, one of the operative force completed the job and the stone was swung into its place with the usual prayer that it might long endure in its niche to the glory of God and the prosperity of the Shrine.

After being proved by the working tools of the craft in the hands of the Deputy Grand Master and the Grand Wardens, the stone was pronounced well and truly laid in ample form.

Then followed the oration of the Grand Master, a scholarly and well-considered address which, next to the famous address of the late President Harding at Washington, last June, was one of the most notable utterances on the Shrine ever recorded.

After tracing the origin and rise of the Shrine from its small beginnings to its present membership of more than half a million, with Temples throughout the continent of North America, in Honolulu, in Mexico and in the Canal Zone, the Grand Master declared that while not in itself a Masonic degree, it was strongly Masonic in that membership in the Order was dependent upon the holding of membership in the Masonic bodies, and spoke warmly of the advantages of an order in which the members of those bodies might meet in friendly intimacy and find in orderly amusement the relaxation all men required, and wound up with the declaration that the Shrine has ceased to be merely the playground of Masons and has gained added greatness through engaging in the great work of relieving the afflictions of crippled children; a work to which six hospitals are already devoted, for which five more are planned and which will be expanded until no part of this country and Canada is without facilities for the relief of all malformed little ones, without regard to race, color or creed.

In times past there has been a tendency to regard the Shrine as too frivolous to be regarded as even an appendage of the Masonic system, and sometimes not without reason, but the Grand Master made it plain that the great work we are doing has the approval of the Masonic authorities, and not alone the approval, but the admiration of the Grand Bodies.

No Shriner who stood within the sound of the Grand Master's voice could hear the eulogy without being proud of the work we are undertaking and carrying through to such successful completion, and it was fitting that there should stand upon the platform the man who, more than any other, is responsible for that movement. It is hardly necessary to name Freel Kendrick, for while the Shrine shall endure his name shall ever be intimately connected with the great work which his faith and enthusiasm made possible and which brought new dignity and greater permanency to the Order he has served so long and faithfully.

With the singing of the doxology the ceremonies came to an end, and Mecca's greatest day had passed into history so far as the formal observances were concerned. So well had the plans been made and carried out that there was no hitch anywhere, and even the parade moved promptly.

At the building Past Potentate Arthur, in charge of the construction work, had planned admirably. There was ample platform room, to be reached by means of a bridge through to Fifty-fifth street, and there was a neatly carpeted space, properly furnished, for the Grand Lodge officers, while the policing arrangements were such that the stand was not overcrowded by those who had no real reason for being there.

After the ceremony the guests were taken to the McAlpin where Noble Arthur S. Lee, the manager, chairman of the Hotel Committee had ably seconded the efforts of the General Committee. The visiting officers were dined in the colonial room, with the bands and patrols in the ballroom and winter garden, on the 24th floor, and the other visitors in the blue room on the mezzanine.

Clarence M. Dunbar, Imperial line officer, came down from Providence, and you couldn't keep George Eisenbrown, of Rajah, away. He came with a delegation, who had to admit that it looked as though the Mecca Mosque would beat out the Rajah Temple which is his soul's delight. Con Dykeman was supported by Potentate Clifford H. Bradt, Recorder Morrison, and a number of the Past Potentates, and Past Imperial Potentate Phil Schaefer, of Lulu, was with Freel's bunch. Phil was Imperial Potentate so long ago that most new Nobles don't even remember that he held that high office, but he gives to Lulu Temple the distinction of being able to claim two Past Imperial Potentates.

All of the Past Potentates came over from Salaam to see that Andy Foulds did not get into any trouble in the big city, for there were Henry Egner and Col. Buttle and Ed Breem and Recorder Emeritus Ward.

And Henry was there. Henry Lansburg, of Almas, of course. Now and then Henry takes a couple of days off to manage his big store in Washington, but the rest of the time he visits round, and never wears his welcome out. Henry has the noisiest fez and the warmest heart in all Shrinedom, and it would not be a party with Henry not in evidence.

Then Sunday morning came, and the party was all over; most of it had been over long before that, but even the tight-clingers let go when the milkman came around, and Mecca settled down to the long hard drive that intervenes between the laying of the corner-stone and the dedication. It's a long reach, but it is hoped that some time next year the members of the Holding Company will turn over to the Temple the completed job, and when they do Mecca will have a home second to none in the country, and easily the best example of modified Arabian architecture in the United States.

Most of the Arabic-Moorish designs are along the ornate lines of the palaces; with a wealth of arabesque and arch work, of grille and turnip topped towers. That is Arabic, but the plans for the Mecca Mosque are far more characteristic of the more general Arabic style. The over-ornamentation commonly accepted as Moorish in this country is no more characteristic of the type than is a merry-go-round front characteristic of American architecture.

The plain, severe lines of the Mosque are much more in keeping and will introduce a new note into American architecture. It will present one of the most elaborate uses of colored tiles ever made in an American-built structure, and yet the effect will not be garish though nine different colors will be used for the front, against a finish of sandstone on granite.

Fifteen or twenty years ago the use of any color to relieve the stolid sameness of brick or stone was regarded as daring—new art—but in Egypt and Arabia color, particularly reds, yellows and greens, have been used to relieve the drabness of the mud-plastered walls and adobe fronts. The Mosque design utilizes the same idea, but in colored terracotta against sandstone, and while the suggestion of nine colors in a single mixture may suggest a chromatic riot, the result will be found eye-pleasing and artistic, and the Mosque should be the Mecca for every visiting architect.

The north front will be less oriental in treatment, but here, too, the use of tiling will be well worked out in the upper stories and give a touch of color to the surface of yellow pressed brick. It is difficult to give a suggestion of the effect aimed at without color plates, but in a comparatively little time now it will be possible to observe the effect, for the steel is going up rapidly and once the skeleton of the auditorium is in place the sheathing of stone will rise quickly, and even in the early stages will convey some suggestion of the architect's aims.

In a word the Mecca Mosque is going to be a distinct addition to the architectural features of a city in which have been assembled examples of almost every school and every age. It will be a building as distinctive as the Flatiron or the Woolworth, though more comparable to the Singer Building, in which a more generous use of color has been made. It will be one of the half dozen buildings visitors will feel they must see, and it would not be surprising to find the sightseeing buses making a detour to include the Mosque in the uptown route.

The interior will be as distinctive as the outside, and the auditorium has been as

carefully planned to carry out the suggestion of the Orient adapted to occidental needs. The color scheme has not yet been decided, though a plaster model has been constructed for experimental purposes, but in the architectural outline the atmosphere is more carefully preserved than in any other structure on this continent with the possible exception of Smith's in St. Augustine.

The executive portions of the building will be more American in their design as benefits their more modern usage, but Mecca is preparing to give to New York a building that is at once a thing of architectural beauty and novelty and an auditorium unique in its construction and adaptability to a wide range of uses. It is not unlikely that the auditorium when it is completed, will replace the Hippodrome as the home of popular Sunday concerts of the higher grade such as once packed that place from dome to backstage walls; it will be well adapted to automobile or similar shows, to conventions, to athletic exhibitions, should these be deemed desirable, and —best of all—it is planned to be the perfect type of auditorium for Shrine ceremonials, combining the best features of the stage and arena styles.

The corner-stone is laid and the building is well up. It is well in advance of the bond sale. Let's catch up by buying more bonds and making it possible for the Holding Company to work unhampered by financial cares. They have done wonders; more perhaps than they might have done had the enterprise been their private venture. Let's make it as easy as possible for them. There are two ways to do this:

Buy bonds.

Get candidates, 500, for November 27th.

Let's go!

Frank G. Fowler, Captain of the Arab Patrol, celebrated his silver wedding Columbus Day, and Mrs. Fowler joined in, just to make it unanimous. At the Patrol drill on October 9 the boys presented Mrs. Fowler with a medal for the endurance record in the shape of a silver coffee service, and urged her to stick it out for something even better on the golden wedding. She promised to try hard.

We must have the 500 or more for November 27

Field Music Notes

Our new unit, The Field Music, is making wonderful progress under the leadership of our Drum Major, Bobby Lawson, whose past military experience is a wonderful asset to this unit. The precise way it is being handled spells success. In fact, so much progress has been made that they are beyond the inexperienced class and they are now looking for experienced buglers and fifers.

The unit has shown its power and ability in our last ceremonial at the Imperial Session at Washington, D. C., and it has received many compliments in the way it has handled itself.

We are adding fifers to our Field Music and appeal to those who think they can master it to apply for membership. Experienced men would be more beneficial, and we must have quite a few among the Nobility. We also desire some more buglers, not necessarily experienced, but if so, so much the better.

This unit meets on the first and third Monday of every month at the headquarters, and the Drum Major will be very glad to greet you. We have experienced instructors and it is now up to the Nobility to give the Field Music their best support.

Membership at this time is composed of a live-wire bunch and you will never regret joining.

Do not delay in answering this appeal, as the Nobility should quickly complete this unit. It is going to be the best in the country, and the Nobles of Mecca Temple will be proud of them.

—500 or more for Nov. 27—

Noble Edwin P. Brooks, bandmaster of the Kalma Temple Band, has written a march, Mecca Temple, which he has dedicated to Lou Donnatin, former manager of the Band, and William Emory Pettit, who was secretary when Noble Brooks was in touch with our organization. It was played along the line of march in the corner-stone parade and will be repeated at the Ceremonial Session of November 27th. It is a snappy number and both Lou and Bill appreciate the honor of being its godfathers.

—500 or more for Nov. 27—

Noble James McGee, oldest living Shriner, has been elected honorary member of Mohammed and Ansar Temples. We don't know just how many temples have similarly honored Jimmy in his long service, but he must have a bunch of certificates.

Meccan Oct 1923

SHRINERS AT SITE OF NEW MOSQUE

Attend Laying of Cornerstone of $2,500,000 Home for Mecca Temple.

FOUR PATROLS IN PARADE

Potentates and Nobles From Many Oases Participate in Masonic Ceremonies.

The cornerstone of Mecca Temple's new home, which is to be erected at 124 West Fifty-sixth Street, was laid with imposing ceremonies yesterday, with Shriners from all parts of the country participating. The cornerstone was laid by Judge Arthur S. Tompkins, Grand Master of Masons in the State of New York, assisted by his staff and by officers and members of Mecca Temple, New York; Lu Lu Temple, Philadelphia; Salaam Temple, Newark, and Kismet Temple, Brooklyn. Conrad V. Dykeman of Brooklyn, Imperial Potentate of the order, and his staff attended.

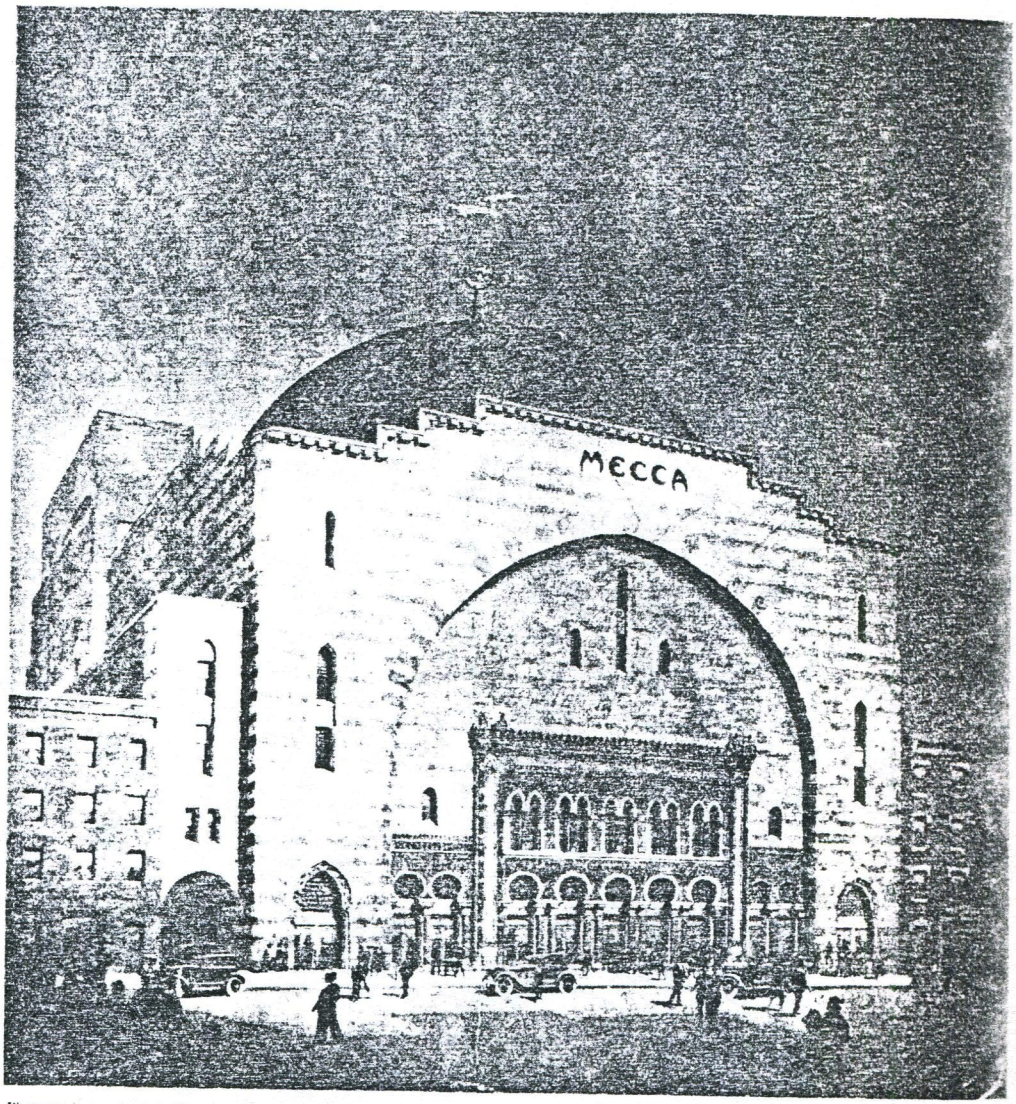
The ceremonies at the site of the new mosque were preceded by a parade of Shriners in the following formation: Grand Marshal, Colonel Walter A. Delamater; Chief of Staff, Colonel John [illegible] Bradley; aids, Lieut. Col. James Elich, [illegible] Ames T. Brown, Fred Kuehnle, Frank Potter, E. A. Robertson and Captain J. H. Buckley. Lu Lu Temple Band, patrol, Legion and nobility, Salaam Temple Band, patrol, nobility, [illegible] Band, patrol, nobility, Mecca Temple Band, patrol, [illegible] with visiting [illegible] on the rear.

The Lu Lu Temple contingent was led by W. [illegible] Potentate, Salaam, by Andrew Foulds Jr., Potentate; Kismet, by Clifford H. Bradt, Potentate, and Mecca, by Arthur H. Diamant, Potentate. With the latter marched the officers of Mecca Temple and the officers of the holding company of the new mosque.

After the ceremonies the Shriners were guests at a dinner at the Hotel McAlpin.

The new mosque, which is to have a large auditorium, will be a twelve-story building of Oriental design and will cost $2,500,000.

Mecca Temple was organized in 1872 by thirteen prominent Masons of New York City, in the old Knickerbocker Cottage at Sixth Avenue and Twenty-eighth Street, now occupied by Mouquin's Restaurant. This was the mother temple of all Shrines. The Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine now has 155 temples in North America, with a total membership of 550,000 nobles. One of the activities of the order is the erection of hospitals throughout the country for the relief of crippled children.



Photograph copyrighted, 1924, by Mecca Temple Holding Company, Incorporated

THE AUDITORIUM FRONT OF THE NEW MOSQUE

Herewith we present the reproduction of the architect's drawing of the new Mosque, showing the frontage on Fifty-fifth street. The design will be worked out in granite, sandstone and terra cotta in various colors, this being one of the most brilliant fronts ever designed for a semi-public building. The Mosque is destined to take high rank among the architectural examples in New York City, and will truly be the Mecca of architects and builders from all parts of the country. Not alone is the front unique in the history of terra cotta work, but in every department this building represents the last word in modern construction and has been pronounced one of the most interesting buildings in the country.

Monster Girder Is Set

Largest Single Piece of Structural Steel in New York Is Put into Mosque Building

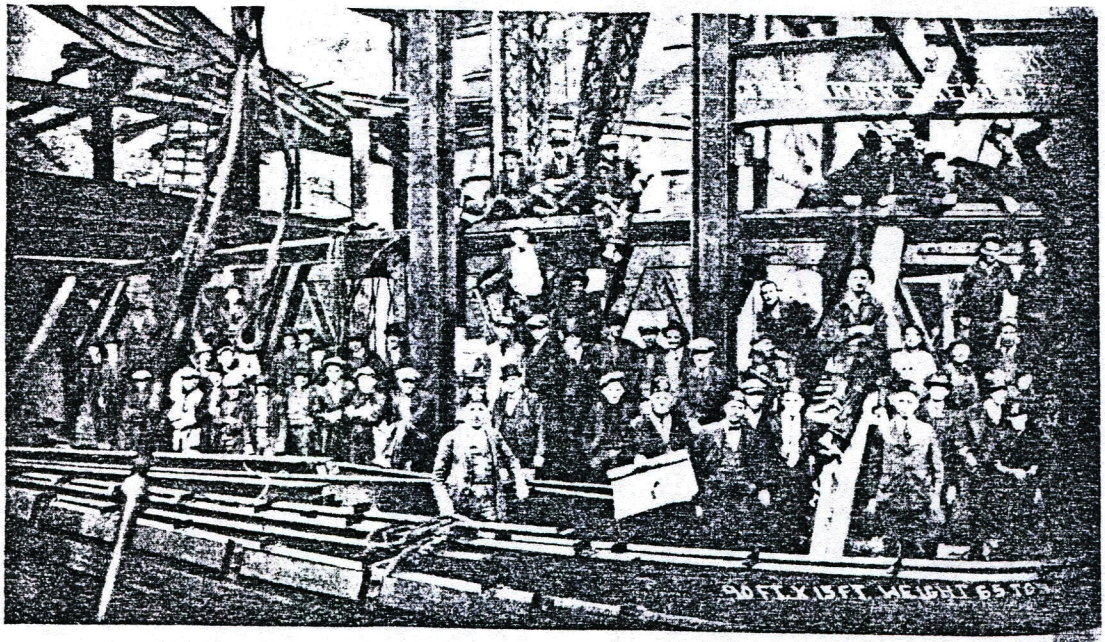
WHAT is said to be the largest single piece of steel ever set into a building in New York City was put in place in the skeleton of the new Mosque building on November 6 without the slightest trouble.

This girder weighs 65 tons in the single casting, and with its side pieces represents a gross weight of 95 tons, yet the two huge derricks swung it into place without the slightest trouble; indeed, it was an easier task than pulling it in off the street, when it was delivered the week before. Then the booms were extended at such an angle that the leverage more than doubled the weight, whereas in the setting the hoist was almost straight up and the only difficulty to be feared was that the damp ropes might bind on the drums and then suddenly let go, throwing the weight, plus the strain of the drop, on the cables.

When the girder arrived two lighters were required to ferry it across the Hudson, not so much on account of its weight as that the two derricks might be available for unloading at the dock.

The trip was made without incident, and the huge beam, 90 feet long and 13 feet deep, was laid upon the dock, where it was slung to one of the largest trucks in the city.

Snaking so monstrous a load through the city streets was no light task, and the police assigned 5 o'clock in the morning as the time for its transfer to the lot, a detail of police going along to render whatever traffic regulation might be needed. Even with the exercise of the utmost care over a designated route there were more than 50 manholes broken in, and the contractors did not breathe freely until the two subways had been crossed and the load came to a



THE LARGEST SINGLE GIRDER EVER

Embodying the last word in steel construction, the main girder in the new Mosque [illegible] show, the second largest used in any structure. The main girder is 90 feet long, 15 feet high [illegible] was put in place on the morning of November 6, without the slightest hitch, the event being [illegible] L. Franklin Rich. Owing to the laws of optics, this appears to be circular, whereas the beam [illegible] all in. It is too large for the ordinary camera. That's Recorder Lou Donnatin over to the left.

rest on the Fifty-fifth Street side of the lot.

It was not practicable to swing it into the lot at once, and it blocked the street for some time before it could be taken in. The selection of the 6th for its final placement was not dictated by the fact that it was a holiday. That just happened. It was handled as soon as the supporting structure could be made ready, for everyone on the lot felt that life would be better worth living once the task was done. Every possible precaution had been taken to avoid any slip, but that was no guarantee that nothing could happen. Lots of things might turn up, apart from the binding of the cables in case the day should be wet.

The day was wet, but the cables did not bind and the setting of the gigantic span was attended by less trouble than some of the pygmy beams of half a ton or so.

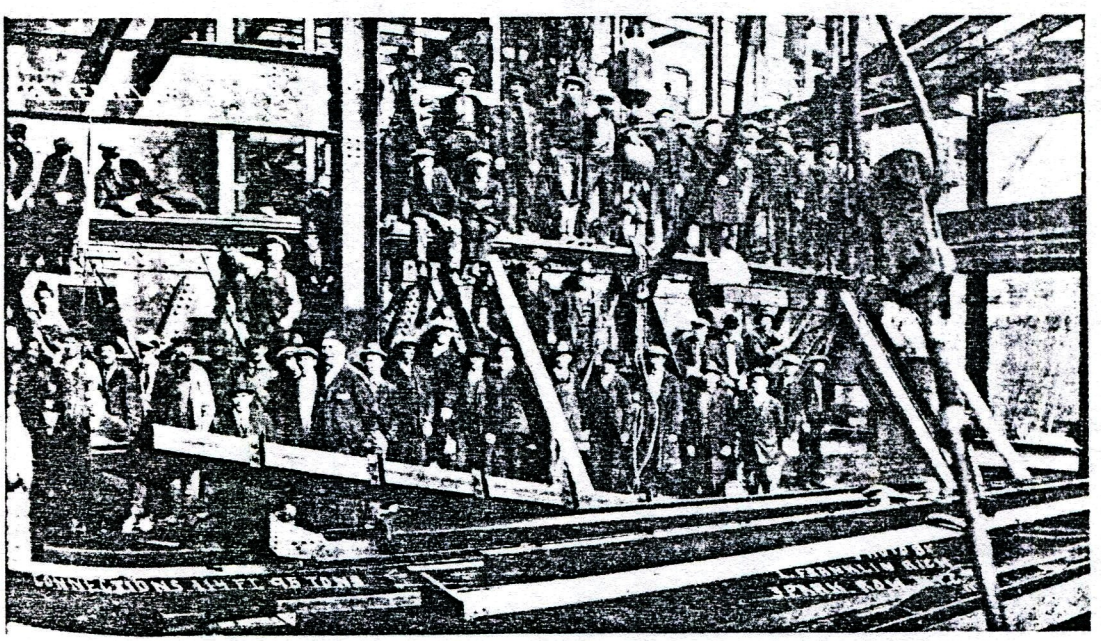
The Pathe News made a photographic record of the event for its news weekly, and the Fox News planned to send a cameraman aloft on the beam itself. The light was too poor to make this feasible, so only Pathe has a record of the event. It will be shown in the theatres throughout the country. Ask your local manager about it when you visit your favorite picture theatre.

The remainder of the steel comes in shorter sections and each day brings the work more nearly under cover. The administration portion of the building is already under roof and the interior workmen, the steamfitters, plumbers, electricians and the rest, are hard at work. Pretty soon the entire structure will be completely enclosed, and the steel men will be off the job and the plasterers will be to the fore.

All of this takes money, and it would seem to be in order to call attention to the fact that we need to sell the bonds a little faster than they have been going.

If you have bought, buy again, to celebrate. If you have none as yet, remember we need the money right now. Kick in, Nobles. Hot air is pretty poor building material. It takes more than that.

Noble Harry A. Gibson, 2256, writes his congratulations to the Potentate and the artist who designed the cover for the last issue of The Meccan. What did you other fellows think?



INTO A BUILDING IN NEW YORK CITY

Temple is the largest single steel girder ever used in this city and, so far as the records eighs 65 tons. With the side pieces it is 114 feet long and has a total weight of 95 tons. It the cameraman of the Pathe News. This reproduction is from a still photograph made by straight. The curve is due to the panoramic camera used, which was necessary to get it ng the blueprint. Past Potentate Harry C. Arthur stands at his right.

Mosque Nears Completion

We Are Roofed in and Need Not Fear Rain or Inclemencies—The Auditorium Takes Form

DURING the Democratic Convention the editor of The Meccan went over the Mosque with Past Potentate Arthur and Noble Boyd, who built the mosque of Abou Saad Temple on the Canal Zone. Noble Boyd is a contractor who knows construction from every angle, and he expressed the highest appreciation of our own Mosque. It was the opinion of an expert.

The building is vastly different from that on the Zone, which was built after the native fashion, with very few nails. There is an auditorium, for example, 100 by 120 feet, with not a single nail in the floor. The logs are dovetailed and then adzed down to a rough surface for the planer. That's very different from the concrete construction we are using, but we cannot very well afford mahogany floors up here, where it is cheaper and better than concrete on the Zone.

Noble Boyd was telling about a table in his home, 9 feet long and 46 inches wide, made of old railroad ties. But it sounds different when you are told that the ties are rosewood. He bought 30,000 of them when the old French Panama Railroad was torn up, and the finely seasoned wood makes the finest sort of furniture.

But Boyd started in on the roof and went straight down through the building, and he was not praising things just to be polite, either. His comment was too technical to be the perfunctory appreciation of a guest. He took a workman's delight in a workmanlike job.

He particularly admired the combination of terra cotta and caen stone used for the frontage and in the lobby. It is as pretty a piece of terra cotta work as has ever been put into a building in America, and the firm supplying the terra cotta brings all of its prospective clients to the Mosque to see just what can be done with this material. Hitherto terra cotta, except in browns and grays, has been sparingly used, particularly for exterior work, but with the Mosque to show architects and builders it will be strange if its use in color is not materially extended through other lines. Unless you have seen the Fifty-fifth Street front you cannot appreciate just what can be done to get color without garishness.

In a few weeks now the concrete workers will give place to the plasterers, the scaffolding will come down, the seats put in place, and almost overnight the building will be ready for occupancy.

The greatest help has been the completion of the roof, which permits the work to go forward in all sorts of weather. As this is written there is still a section of tile to go on the rounded dome above the auditorium, but the shell of the dome is weatherproof.

The lobbies have their terra cotta and are ready for their stone facing, and while the work is more backward in the supper room below the auditorium, it is merely a matter of waiting until the auditorium is complete before this is taken in hand. It has all been planned and provided for and all will be ready probably before the end of October.

One thing is dead certain. There will be a session in the Mosque in November—one of the most gorgeous and important sessions that Mecca Temple has ever held.

The building has already commenced to produce a revenue; small in comparison with what the eventual result will be, yet sufficient to show what will come when all is ready.

Lodges have been meeting in the three lodge rooms for several months, and negotiations are pending for other reservations.

Suitable lodge rooms are not plentiful in New York. There are many more lodges than the Masonic Hall can accommodate. Live lodges which cannot get in on Twenty-third Street are glad to make use of these modern and comfortable rooms, and often all three are in use in one evening.

Work is being rushed through in every department, and it is only a matter of a few months when the Mosque will be fully completed.

But there is one matter that looms large. The sale of bonds has fallen off, and without money we cannot complete the building as speedily as we could otherwise.

For a time the sale of these securities was steady and kept pace with the expendi-

tures, but now there are greater demands for money and smaller sales.

Some good Nobles are making frequent purchases, but the rank and file appear to have given the matter little thought. For the past couple of months The Meccan has not made the usual mention of this matter because it was felt that the matter was getting stale, but the time has come for another bond drive.

If you want to see the building completed send in your subscription. Don't wait until you can take up a five hundred or a thousand dollar bond. Turn in each hundred as you can spare it. The need for money is immediate and important.

To many if not most of the members of Mecca Temple one hundred dollars is not a great sum. One hundred dollars by itself will not do much toward building a mosque, but in the aggregate these small subscriptions mount up. It is not much for you to put in, but if you all come in you can make much easier the labors of the Holding Company.

Few of you realize what a tremendous amount of work devolves upon this group of Past Potentates. The position is far from being an honorary one. It means constant work, planning and figuring, and where the financing must be added to the construction details the work is more than doubled.

These men contribute their time and effort without a fee or salary. Even the Recorder, who as secretary performs the clerical detail work, is not paid for his labor. It all goes into the Mosque, and the least we on the side lines can do is to help them along by reducing their financial worries to a minimum, and if you would all keep the bond issue in mind when you plan your own investments or talk with your friends the work would soon be completely financed.

You are not asked to make a contribution toward the building. The Holding Company has sought to keep away from the need of an assessment. You are asked merely to invest in a business proposition which promises a more than adequate return on the capital once the construction is complete.

There is a real demand for another large auditorium in New York. We have too many theaters, but it is impossible to obtain any of these for a special meeting except at non-theatrical times. The building should be in constant demand for conventions, concerts, special theatrical performances, advance film showings and the like.

Carnegie Hall, just across the street, is booked solidly through the season, often for two events in a single day. There are many "overflow" concerts at Aeolian Hall which would be more profitable to their promoters could a larger auditorium be obtained, and the Mecca Mosque will provide precisely this.

Moreover, it will not be necessary to impose the restrictions made by Carnegie. We can have a political meeting in the afternoon, with smoking all over the house, and in the evening we can give the auditorium to the W. C. T. U. and they would never know that the auditorium recently had been blue with smoke.

And there is no danger of fire from the unrestricted use of tobacco. You cannot get enough wood out of the auditorium to build a decent election bonfire. Turn a firebug loose in the building and he would run out of matches and patience long before he had started enough flame to call out the fire department. It is the last word in fireproofing, just as it is the last word in ventilation, in seating, in decoration and in comfort.

Don't you want to feel that you have a little more money in your own building? Send your subscriptions to Louis N. Donnatin, Recorder, 130 West Fifty-sixth Street.

Do it today, before you forget.

USE THE APPLICATION Blank on page 16: let us make the Dedication Class 1000 STRONG

The Mosque Takes Shape

Scaffolding Coming Down and the Building Will Soon Begin to Look Natural

RECENT visitors to the Mosque, unless they are familiar with building operations, probably are wondering if the place will be done by Christmas, but to those who know how quickly the finishing touches are put on, it appears that the building is pretty nearly ready.

Just now it might be likened to the youngster who is a boy no longer and not yet a man. It doesn't look like anything in particular and the finished positions only serve to give emphasis to the unreadiness of the rest.

The upper gallery is fully plastered and the dome is in place, but the ceiling of the first balcony was not done, though probably the work is finished by the time this gets off the press. Enough can be seen to show the general plan, and this is the first time since work was commenced that the interior even remotely suggests the plaster model made some time ago.

Probably the auditorium will remain pure white through the present season, for to put on the colors now would be but a temporary job, to be repeated next summer, and so it has been decided to let the walls "ripen" through the current season, though eventually the auditorium will match the brilliant color scheme of the front, though more in browns and deep reds and blues.

The lobbies will be fully finished in Caen stone and terra cotta, and here the effect will be permanent since no distemper is used. For the first time one senses the spaciousness of the interior and the general scale of the structure.

With the scaffolding out, it becomes apparent that the Mosque will be one of the most comfortable auditoriums in the city, with plenty of foyer and lobby space. There are ample foyers on three floors and the man who comes to the sessions chiefly to foregather with his friends will have plenty of room in which to chat without disturbing the ceremonial.

The layout of the building may best be suggested by saying that each of the two galleries is two stories high. There are offices in the corners, at the rear, and these run two to the gallery. Back of the tier, the floor is carried out, to give a foyer back of the seats, on the scheme of the modern picture theatres, though these latter mostly offer only one gallery and one foyer. Entrance is had to the balconies at a point midway of the seats, those in front turning down toward the rail and the others turning back toward the wall. In an emergency both stairways and fire escapes can be used for exit.

All of the floors are solidly concreted over the girders, and there is not a post in the auditorium to obstruct the vision. Every seat in the house has a clear sight-line to the stage.

Under the main floor and under each gallery run ducts for the ventilating system, and pure air is pumped through these to every part of the structure, while in the roof and elsewhere are huge grilles, leading to other ducts, through which the impure air is pumped out; the dual system permitting the air to be entirely changed in a few minutes.

These ducts are of galvanized steel and more than 300,000 pounds of metal have been used in their construction. That is 150 tons, not to take into account about 50,000 pounds of pumps and fans. The vitiated air is exhausted through an opening above the ceiling, in the tiled dome. This is on the side away from the street and the opening has an area of several hundred square feet.

The Mecca Mosque is going to be the most perfectly ventilated building in the city.

Downstairs the supper room is assuming shape. This is a practically unbroken surface about three-fourths the area of the floor of the Seventy-first Regiment Armory. In two of the corners there are pillars close to the walls, to cover two essential girders, but all of the rest is bare of obstruction. The kitchens and other culinary offices are in the ell occupied by the executive section, sharing the space with the stage trap rooms.

No hotel in the city can offer so large a space, nor can any hotel give better kitchen facilities. Entrance is had through stairways to the right and left of the main entrance, and the room can be used in-

dependently of the auditorium when desired. One entertainment can be given in the auditorium and another in the supper room without interfering with each other in the least or they can be combined.

In another month the building should be close to completion, for the end comes quickly. Just now the tearing down of the scaffolding, the cleaning up of the dirt and the final work make the place look as though it never would reach completion. To any but an experienced observer the chance of an October opening would appear to be hopeless, yet the debris will be cleared away with amazing speed, and almost overnight the auditorium will come into its own.

The further the work progresses, the more apparent it becomes that the new building is truly a model of its kind. Everything has been looked to, and nothing passed unnoticed. Since the house will be used for lectures there has been ample provision made for the projection of motion pictures, which are used to illustrate most modern lectures. This room is located in its customary place at the rear of the upper gallery. It has space for two machines and the usual stereopticons and spotlights, each with its own "port" or opening, all of which may be closed in the event of a possible fire.

Each opening is closed by means of a shutter which naturally remains closed by its own weight. It is held open by a system of chains. Over each of the machines there is set in a length of film, and any blaze from the machines will set fire to this film and drop all of the ports. The operator simply steps out of the door, which closes behind him, and the film can burn itself out in the fireproof room without even a whisp of smoke entering the auditorium.

This room will make the Mosque the ideal place for a special showing to the trade, and Nobles who are members of the various producing companies are urged to bear the Mosque in mind. The rental will not exceed that of the places where these showings are now held, and the display can be made in a regular theatre instead of in a ballroom of half the capacity and none of the conveniences.

For lectures such as those given by Burton Holmes, the Mosque cannot be improved upon. For the lectures at Carnegie Hall it is necessary to make a temporary fit-up in two of the boxes, and a special permit has to be taken out for each occasion. It is probable that we can get a permit to cover the full year.

But it is not merely as a motion picture theatre that the Mosque offers advantages. There is stage space for the largest productions, with a fully trapped stage and every device suggested by the most modern development in theatrical mechanism. There is a full complement of dressing rooms, with baths and toilet facilities on each tier, and the place is ideal for orchestral concerts. It is an all-around building, to serve every amusement and public purpose.

We are on the last lap now. Probably the next issue of The Meccan will be able to chronicle the fact that the building is substantially complete. When the structure is thrown open for the Exposition-Carnival you will be delighted with the result, though the gleaming whiteness of the walls will not suggest the eventual finish. Your first introduction to the real theatre, however, will come with the Dedication, for the seats will not be put into place until the fair is closed, since they will interfere with the amusement features.

Enough can be seen, however, to show that all that The Meccan has said of the structure has been conservative, to say the least—and we have said a lot of nice things, at that.

Who Owns This?

J. H. Hitchcock, 1512, found a Shrine emblem on the depot platform at Atlantic Highlands, N. J., last July. He reported his find to The Meccan, but too late to make the August issue. Noble Hitchcock says: "The intrinsic value of this jewel is not great, but sentimentally it may be invaluable," and so he advises of his find that the rightful owner may be discovered. If you lost such an emblem down on the Jersey coast, call up Noble Hitchcock at Franklin 1990, and he will arrange to turn it over to you.

Page Seven Describes the Biggest Stunt in Our History

READ IT CAREFULLY.

Looks Like a December Ceremonial

The Mosque Is Nearing Completion, But the Work Will Probably Require Most of November

OCTOBER thirteenth, as told elsewhere, the men on the job held a little informal jollification in celebration of the anniversary of the laying of our corner-stone. One year before Most Worshipful Grand Master Tompkins pronounced the stone well and truly laid.

Then there was a mere shell of stone over on the north side and a hole filled with iron girders and steam drills on the Fifty-fifth Street side.

A few days ago this writer made one of his trips over the job with Bob Dunn and Harry C. Arthur and got a better idea of the scheme of things than ever before, since the only remaining scaffolding was that on which the plaster men were working on the proscenium arch.

The scaffolds were down in the body of the house and it was possible to verify earlier impressions as to the sight lines.

The first thing to strike anyone familiar with theatre building is the balconies. These cover more space than usual, and follow the general lines of the motion picture theatres, where the idea of using very deep galleries first came into use.

A quarter of a century ago a deep balcony would have been regarded as an architectural crime. Six or eight rows of seats were about the limit, and the center of the horseshoe was so remote from the stage as to require the use of opera glasses in the average-sized theatre.

In our Mosque the balcony covers more than half of the lower floor, and brings the front rail close to the stage. The horseshoe has become a section of an oval, and the seats on the side are little closer to the stage than the center.

Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the center is closer to the stage than in the old-fashioned house, for this is the more important point.

The pitch of the balcony is fairly gradual, yet the seat tiers are so placed that there is a clear and unobstructed view of the stage from every part of every row. You do not have to look between the heads and shoulders of the two who sit in front of you. You can look over, and you don't have to be a giant, at that.

In the gallery there is an even greater pitch; about a forty-inch raise to each seat tier. And you don't realize how big both balcony and gallery are until you walk up and then walk down again. Two trips up and back would equal a week's supply of daily dozens of the most strenuous sort.

The balconies are clear and ready for the finishing touches. The sides of the proscenium are done with the ornamental plaster work in place, and only the arch itself was still incomplete. Probably the scaffolding will be down by the time this gets into your hands, and you'll get a chance to see what real Oriental architecture looks like.

All over the place workmen of the various units are putting on the finishing touches to their various jobs, and down in the supper room the last of the work is being done.

The progress is being facilitated through the turning on of the steam, to dry the work, for the heating system is fully installed.

The structure is in a fine state of forwardness, but it is not probable that the work will be completed before the end of November, but "completed" means just that.

The work could be rushed a couple of weeks, but this would mean less care in the perfection of the details and more work later on to repair the defects. Bob Dunn is moving as rapidly as possible, but he is not sacrificing thoroughness to speed. He is going to turn over one of the best jobs he has ever been connected with, and you won't have to go around with an umbrella raised for fear some of the plaster ornaments will drop off or a section of the ventilation ducts assault the back of your neck.

The projection room on the top of the gallery is as modern as all other parts of the house. It carries the latest ideas, and is as safe as a church. Over each machine is flared a funnel which will carry off the heat of the lamp houses under ordinary conditions and the smoke from a burning film should an accident occur. Ten thousand feet of film could be burned in that room and all the audience would know would be that the picture was off the screen. No picture theatre is better provided.

There is one feature that is absolutely novel. The console for the organ will be located in the center of the balcony. Harry C. Arthur, Jr., the son of Past Potentate Arthur, is the head of the West Coast Amusement Company, controlling a couple of hundred theatres in California, and he writes his father that the idea is brand new to him. He adds that this should be the ideal location, since the organist can better judge the tone values he is achieving than when he is too close to the pipes. At the same time he can follow the director from the orchestra pit as closely as though he were sitting with the other musicians.

This is just one of a score of little features that are to be found in no other existing house, but will probably be found in houses to be planned from now on.

The stage is now being fitted and they are getting ready to install the switchboard with its scores of circuits and combinations. It will be one of the most perfectly wired stages in New York.

And all of this work is going forward at the same time, the various gangs working without interfering with each other, so that the cleaning up is progressing as rapidly as possible.

Thanksgiving Day should see the men out of the building, with the exception of the seat men. The Mosque should be ready for the fair and dedication by the first or second week in December.

This gives you another month in which to round up the candidate you are going to bring, or to land another if you have already hooked one.

And we are going to need them. This stage is no Carnegie Hall affair with a platform designed to accommodate a symphony orchestra of sixty. This is a grand opera sized stage with room for an army, and forty or fifty men are going to rattle around in that space. We want more —as many more as you can get. If we cannot land at least five hundred there is something wrong. We should be able to get in a thousand for this first ceremonial.

What are you doing toward that end?

Ross Cox has had a pretty dull year. Now is the time he has been waiting for. We owe it to him to give him one BIG ceremonial, and we can do that only with plenty of candidates. We can take care of as many as you will bring, and the more we get the more we can give you.

The Scottish Rite is working again and the Commanderies have resumed their work as well. There is plenty of material being turned out, and a large proportion of those men need only a little urging. Get them in on this dedication class, and don't wait until the last moment.

Get their applications signed and bring them at once to the Recorder. The membership committee will begin to sit presently, and you want your man to get in on the early scrutiny. If you all wait until the last moment the committee cannot function in time. Leave the eleventh hour for the late comers and try and make your candidate one of the early birds.

Ten years from now the man who was in the Dedication Class is going to brag about it, and he will thank you for getting him in line for this distinction.

Let's try and make it a thousand. It can be done.

Notes

Out in Los Angeles the members of Pacific Lodge, No. 233, have started a Two-Thirty-Three Club composed mostly of members of that New York lodge, chiefly in the motion picture industry. H. L. Franklin, 12574, is Secretary-Treasurer, and a large number of Meccans are on the roster. The club already has a membership of more than fifty and hopes to pass the hundred mark before long. They visit local lodges in a body and generally contribute to the entertainment of their hosts, since the membership includes many well-known players. You'll always find the Meccans where there are Masonic activities.

Stanley B. Stringfield, 17728, announces the arrival of Thomas Jefferson Stringfield on September 10. Louis Robbins, 17295 had a daughter for a New Year's present September 23.

Only one Noble has responded to our request for information as to their political aspirations. Jacob R. Rosenberg is a candidate for Presidential Elector on the Republican ticket.

Dr. Charles N. Gelber, who went abroad last Spring to study in the European ear, nose and throat clinics, returned on the *Aquitania* on September 12.

Dr. Gustav M. E. Lind, 8239, announced his marriage to Mrs. Aida M. Houston on September 23. They will be at home at 171 West 57th Street, after November 1.

The Day of Days Is December 29

Full Details of the Ceremonies to Mark the Completion of the Handsomest Mosque in North America

MONDAY, December 29, or the second day of the sixth month, if you prefer, has been set apart by your Potentate as THE DAY. Mark it well and prepare to join with us in the rare treats arranged by him for the Dedicatory Ceremonials in connection with the new Mosque.

Briefly, these are the business session, in the morning, the parade, at noon, the dedication, at two o'clock, and the formal ceremonial session and welcome to the Imperial Potentate, starting at half past seven.

Probably the first will not appeal to many. It is customary when much work looms to hold a business session at some time prior to the big event that the routine business may be disposed of without encroaching upon the time set apart for the more elaborate work.

To this end the business session has been called for nine o'clock, in the Blackstone Room. Note, if you are not already aware, that the entrance to this room is at 130 West 56th Street.

Here the Temple will be opened, the candidates will be balloted upon, and all necessary business will be transacted. This is, of course, open to members only and upon presentation of the current card and the giving up of the words. It is not anticipated that anything of importance will come before the business session, but there are certain formalities to be complied with, and these are best disposed of when they will not intrude upon the planned program.

At noon, if the weather permits, there will be a parade of the visiting Potentates who are accompanied by their uniformed bodies. There will be at least ten temples in line, and it is probable that others will be added to this list. The ten are already assured, and will turn out in the full glory of Divan, Band, Patrol and other organizations. They will be escorted by Illustrious Potentate Rosslyn M. Cox, with the Divan, Band, Patrol and Assistant Directors of Mecca Temple.

The start will be from the Mosque, but as this is written the line of march has not yet been assigned. The daily papers will carry the announcement. Please look for it and do not call up the Mosque for the information. We shall need the wires for official business not only that day but for the days preceding. All of the city editors realize that this is big local news, and all will carry the announcement, so look for it in the newspapers, please.

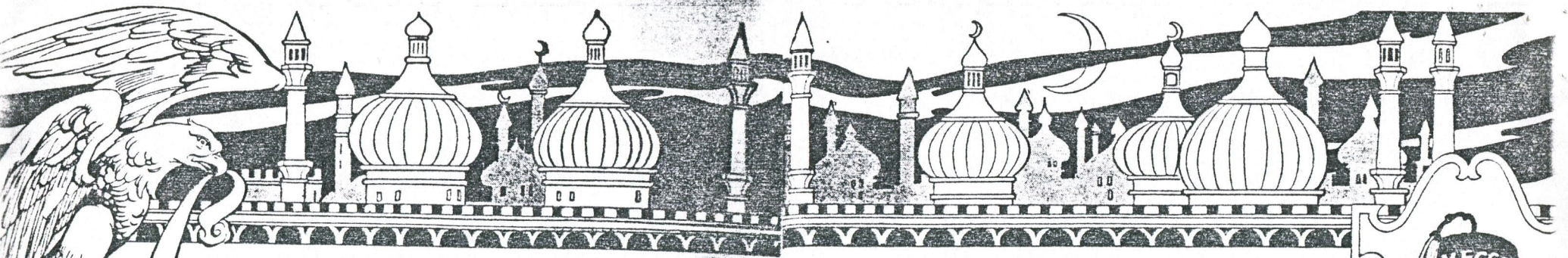
It will be the most gorgeous turnout ever to parade the streets of New York. Perhaps you will recall the comment excited by our Corner-stone Parade, when Lulu, Kismet and Salaam assisted. That made only four organizations, and yet it had New York talking for days about the wonderfully colorful affair. With from ten to fifteen temples in line we will offer a turnout that has never been matched for brilliance. There have been parades with as many uniformed organizations, but these have been diluted with long lines in mufti. In this parade only the uniformed units will turn out, and the line will be one solid mass of color. With from ten to fifteen bands, including our own augmented organization, the musical side will be as important as the costuming.

And just a word to our own musicians. We have within our ranks scores of professional musicians who because of their regular engagements cannot always play with the Mecca Band. This parade will be held on an off day, so far as theatrical performances are concerned. The line of march is short and will be over good pavements, whether we take the route desired or are assigned some other. Won't you all get in touch with Noble Hoffman, conductor of the band, and give Mecca a couple of hours of your time to help make this a band truly worthy of the occasion? We are going to have heavy competition. Let's have as many players as possible.

The bands will participate only in the parade. For the Dedication the musical program will be supplied by an orchestra of thirty-five men, mostly from the Metropolitan Opera House forces, under the leadership of B. Gagliano.

It is felt that to take the band over the parade route and then expect them to go inside and play another two-hour program would be unfair, so a string orchestra will

(Continued on page 10)



The Day Our Dreams Become Reality

MONDAY, DECEMBER 29, 1924

Dedication of the New Mosque of Mecca Temple, A.A.O.N.M.S.

133 West 55th Street, New York, N. Y.

Illustrious Noble, Attend!!!

Nahar el Etnin, Second Day, Sixth Month, Hejra 1343

JAMAZ UL AKHIR

Answering to

Monday, December 29, 1924

Business Session 9 A.M., Blackstone Room, 130 West 56th St.

Ceremonial Session 7:30 P.M., Mecca Temple Mosque

Great Commemoration

SEYID AHMEN ER RUFAI!

(Founder of Rufaieh Dervishes)

GRAND PROCESSIONS! ILLUMINATED TEKKIEHS!

GORGEOUS ENTERTAINMENTS!

WONDROUS FANTASIYA! CHANTING AND ZIKERS!

Louis N. Donnatin

Recorder.

130 West 56th Street.

9:00 A.M.—Business session.

12:00 M. —Parade of the Potentates, Divans, Bands and Uniformed Units of visiting Temples escorted by the Potentate, Divan, Band and Uniformed Units of Mecca Temple, starting from the Mosque.

2:00 P.M.—Dedicatory Service, The Grand Lodge of the State of New York. Addresses by Mayor John F. Hylan, Governor Alfred E. Smith, Hon. Arthur S. Tompkins, Past Grand Master of Masons in the State of New York, Mayor W. Freeland Kendrick, of Philadelphia, Past Imperial Potentate. Miss Caterina Gobbi, soprano, and Ralph Errolle, tenor, soloists, and a section of the Metropolitan Opera House Orchestra.

7:30 P.M.—Ceremonial section and visit of the Imperial Potentate,

ILLUSTRIOUS JAMES E. CHANDLER

The ritualistic work will be done by the Illustrious Potentate assisted by the present Potentates of sister Temples.

For more complete details see page seven

Roosevelt M.C.

Illustrious Potentate.

be employed for the formal program, which will harmonize better with the character of the exercises.

The dedication will start promptly at two o'clock, and will, of course, be held in the Auditorium, the entrance to which is 133 WEST FIFTY-FIFTH STREET. MAKE A CAREFUL NOTE OF THIS.

The business session will be held in the Blackstone Room, entrance to which is 130 West Fifty-sixth Street. The dedication will be in the main auditorium, entrance to which is 133 West 55th Street.

Admission will be by current year card only, but this is a public affair and the Nobles can escort their wives, if they desire.

The program will open with an overture, and at appropriate intervals there will be vocal selections, the soloists being Miss Catterina Gobbi and Ralph Errolle.

Miss Gobbi is a pupil of the famous Toscanini, and a lyric soprano whose singing attracted the most favorable attention of the New York critics on the occasion of her recent debut. She is comparatively a newcomer, but an artist of rare achievement with a wonderfully brilliant voice.

Mr. Errolle is an American and a discovery of Dr. Florenz Ziegfeld (father of the founder of the Follies), for many years the most important figure in the musical mid-West. He has also studied under Hermann De Vries, formerly of the Paris Opera. He has sung in opera with the Metropolitan, Chicago Opera Company and other organizations, but is chiefly noted in connection with his concert tours. He was, from 1920 to 1923, with J. C. Williamson's Opera Company in Australasia, and has but recently returned to the United States.

The service will be opened with an invocation by the Right Reverend William T. Manning, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of New York.

This will be followed by the singing of the national anthem by the entire assemblage, led by the soloists.

The Illustrious Potentate, Hon. Rosslyn M. Cox, will make the address of welcome to our visitors, and introduce the Hon. John F. Hylan, Mayor of the city of New York, who will speak on behalf of the Oasis in which our Temple is located.

He will be followed, if his engagements will permit, by His Excellency the Hon. Alfred E. Smith, Governor of the State of New York.

The Grand Lodge of the State of New York, headed by the Most Worshipful William A. Rowan, Grand Master, will then assume charge and dedicate the structure in full form.

The chief address will be made by Most Worshipful and Hon. Arthur S. Tompkins, Past Grand Master of Masons in the State of New York, and Justice of the Supreme Court. His brilliant address on the occasion of the laying of the corner-stone by him is assurance of an intellectual treat.

He will be followed by Hon. W. Freeland Kendrick, Past Imperial Potentate and Mayor of the city of Philadelphia, who will speak on the serious side of Shrinedom.

The program will be closed by the benediction given by Rabbi Joel Blau of Temple Peni-El.

Promptly at half past seven the Temple will be reopened by the Illustrious Potentate Rosslyn M. Cox, and the Imperial Potentate Ill. James E. Chandler, of Ararat Temple, Kansas City, will be officially welcomed. The first Ceremonial in our own Mosque will, appropriately enough, be devoted to the Imperial Visitation.

Noble Chandler is a splendid speaker, and you don't want to miss his talk. Because of his visit the greetings to the other visitors will be shortened, in accordance with custom, but many of the visiting Potentates will get into the limelight in the ritualistic session, for the work will be done by our own Potentate in his proper station and the visitors. Every station will be filled by the present Potentate of some sister temple, including Potentate George E. Meyers of Syria Temple, who will do the High Priest as you have never before seen it done, unless you can recall our own Nobles, Cyp Hunt and Lloyd Bingham. The other stations will be announced at the ceremonial; Noble Kendrick will give the inspired charge.

We shall have a large class and there will be an abundant supply of "fresh meat" to be submitted to the Moslem Test, the splendors of the ritual will be ably supplemented by a festival of mirth such as has never before been possible in Mecca save on those rare occasions when we have been able to hold a session at the Century Theatre or the Hippodrome. Here, at last, we shall not only have the stage room, but the facilities for handling the instruments of torture.

New settings will be used for the presentation, and the stage picture will be of unusual beauty. The rendering of the ritual by visiting Potentates is a genera

custom now at gala ceremonials, but it is pleasant to recall that the first instance of such a ceremonial was at the Century Theatre under the administration of Past Potentate Paul Jones. Paul was the first to make use of this idea. In this, as in most things, Mecca led the way.

Included in the temples to be represented at this session will be:

Acca Temple, Richmond, Va.; Hugh C. Foster, Potentate.

Aladdin Temple, Columbus, Ohio; Harry R. Allen Potentate.

Al Koran Temple, Cleveland, Ohio; L. Barker Smith, Potentate.

Almas Temple, Washington, D. C.; Harry F. Carey, Potentate.

Bektash Temple, Concord, N. H.; Arthur J. Boutwell, Potentate.

Boumi Temple, Baltimore, Md.; J. Monroe Holland, Potentate.

Cairo Temple, Rutland, Vt.; Roger S. Pike, Potentate.

Crescent Temple, Trenton, N. J.; Barton T. Fell, Potentate.

Cyprus Temple, Albany, N. Y.; Aaron P. Krounse, Potentate.

Damascus Temple, Rochester, N. Y.; Joseph W. McWilliams, Potentate.

Irem Temple, Wilkes-Barre, Pa.; Jerome W. Leverich, Potentate.

Ismalia Temple, Buffalo, N. Y.; George L. Hager, Potentate.

Jaffa Temple, Altoona, Pa.; John J. McMurray, Potentate.

Kalurah Temple, Binghamton, N. Y.; Roy G. Pratt, Potentate.

Karnak Temple, Montreal, Can.; Thomas S. Currie, Potentate.

Kazim Temple, Roanoke, Va.; Arthur M. Clay, Potentate.

Khedive Temple, Norfolk, Va.; R. B. W. Lohman, Potentate.

Kismet Temple, Brooklyn, N. Y.; Clifford H. Bradt, Potentate.

Kora Temple, Lewiston, Maine; Walter L. Emerson, Potentate.

Lu Lu Temple, Philadelphia, Pa.; Albert H. Ladner, Jr., Potentate.

Media Temple, Watertown, N. Y.; George A. Stebbins, Potentate.

Melha Temple, Springfield, Mass.; Charles W. Watson, Potentate.

Mocha Temple, London, Can.; Jared Vining, Potentate.

Moslem Temple, Detroit, Mich.; Claud W. Moore, Potentate.

Mt. Sinai Temple, Montpelier, Vt.; Charles A. Davis, Potentate.

Oriental Temple, Troy, N. Y.; James A. Smith, Potentate.

Palestine Temple, Providence, R. I.; Clarence R. Howe, Potentate.

Pyramid Temple, Bridgeport, Conn.; Elmer A. Hooper, Potentate.

Rajah Temple, Reading, Pa.; George E. Eisenbrown, Potentate.

Rameses Temple, Toronto, Can.; Harry L. Glendenning, Potentate.

Salaam Temple, Newark, N. J.; Frank E. Davenport, Potentate.

Sphinx Temple, Hartford, Conn.; Wilbur L. Scranton, Potentate.

Syria Temple, Pittsburgh, Pa.; George E. Meyers, Potentate.

Tigris Temple, Syracuse, N. Y.; Charles F. Northup, Potentate.

Zembo Temple, Harrisburg, Pa.; Mercer B. Tate, Potentate.

Zem Zem Temple, Erie, Pa.; George W. Reichert, Potentate.

Ziyara Temple, Utica, N. Y.; Dr. Rush O. Lees, Potentate.

George Eisenbrown is going to bring over his picturesque automobile if the roads are not too bad between here and Reading. You don't want to miss that. It's not just the usual painted car, such as they use for Imperial Potentates at Imperial Council Sessions. Those are just re-enameled in the Shrine colors. George's car is gorgeous rather than gaudy. It is done in real art work and not dabs of colors. One side is painted to suggest a night scene and the other side shows a daylight landscape, the two being blended on the back so skillfully that it is difficult to tell where one ends and the other begins. We believe that it is the only car of its kind in the country, and if we can get that in the parade it's going to be one of the chief points of interest. Other temples can have their bands and patrols, but there is only one car like George's. It's unique.

Of course, George will come with it. He has not missed anything in the way of a celebration yet, and he certainly is not going to be permitted to miss this. Of the original all-Potentates' cast we believe that George is the only one still the active Potentate of his temple.

Of course, Potentate Northup will bring his hymn book with him, and McWilliams will tote along little Liza Jane. It's a pity we cannot organize a song festival on the side with a decision bout between Little Nellie Kelly and Li'l Liza Jane, but the time will be too crowded to hold champion-

ship affairs, but if you suddenly hear someone talk about Lize you can know it is Mac, and if it's Nellie who is mentioned, you can safely call him Northup without looking at his fez.

We are mighty proud of that array of Shrine talent, and we feel that it is good of them to come to help us celebrate. Many of them were here for the laying of the corner-stone, but we do not recall when Mecca Temple has previously had the honor of entertaining so many Potentates at the same time. They represent most of the temples within a day's ride. Others were asked, but were unable to come, but we shall have between 1,200 and 1,500 official guests, not to mention the many members of other temples who are permanently or transiently in the city. We want to make them all welcome, and it is the desire of your Potentate that each member of Mecca Temple do all he can to make the visitors realize that we have not departed from the ancient landmarks of hospitality and brotherhood. If you see anyone with a strange fez, greet him, see that he is made to feel the welcome that is his right.

And speaking of fezzes, remember that the Noble without a fez is going to be extremely unpopular. It has not yet been made the law that you must show a fez to gain admittance, but it is the request of both your Potentate and the Imperial Council that the fez be worn on all proper occasions. Don't spoil the uniformity of the sessions by forgetting yours. Let's do every possible thing to make this one hundred per cent, and wearing the fez is one of the points.

We have been waiting for this event for more than two years. We have been saving up ever since last Spring. Ross Cox is just as fond of big times as anyone who ever sat upon the throne, but he has been content to sit back and let the work go forward without the usual doings to the end that we might open our own home in the proper blaze of glory. He has called but one ceremonial that candidates might have a chance to accumulate. He has gone without the usual ladies' nights and other special events. Now as his term draws to a conclusion the dream is accomplished. The Mosque has become a reality, and he will have the honor of presiding over its dedication.

He deserves all we can give him, for he has done his share of the hard work without any of the recompenses of glittering ceremonials or brilliant entertainments. He will have to crowd into this single event all that usually is spread over an entire term. Let's all pull together to make this exceed even his expectations.

He can plan, and with the assistance of the Holding Company he has planned a gorgeous affair. He has looked after all of the big details. But a chain is no stronger than its weakest link, and the Nobility, as individuals, alone can carry the event to its highest development.

It will be three years, almost to the day, since it was announced on the stage at Carnegie Hall that we had taken title to a property and presently would start to build. At that time there were still some who thought the announcement merely a gesture of grandeur. There were not wanting the few to predict that presently the land would be sold and that we would go on without a mosque.

In point of fact, we could have taken a profit of one hundred thousand dollars on the original parcel even before we perfected title.

The bond sale was started in a period of financial stress; the reaction following the post-war boom. It was not an easy matter to sell a sufficient number of bonds to warrant the start of building operations, but the work was done. As soon as the funds warranted it, the work was started. The death of the original architect set back the progress somewhat, but it was a check, not a stoppage, and presently things were going full blast again.

Past Potentate Harry C. Arthur, appointed representative of the Holding Company on the job, has been on the ground practically every day since the first drill hole was sunk into the virgin rock underlying what had been an old riding academy. Perhaps a dozen times in the past eighteen months he has taken a day or two off to accompany the Divan on some pilgrimage, but he has been on the job practically all of the time, and he has seen every stone set, every girder riveted into place, he has watched the construction of the hidden parts and—above all else—he has communicated his splendid enthusiasm to the heads of the various trades, and even to the men themselves.

There has never been a structure of similar size reared in this city on which there has been less friction between the various labor unions. There has never been work more carefully and thoroughly done. Built upon a foundation of solid rock that

down to the very spine of Manhattan Island, constructed of the best material by the most conscientious of workmen, we have a building that is a model of beauty, permanence, modernity and comfort.

In a succeeding issue we hope to present to you the full facts about this wonderful building. It is sufficient now to say that the Mosque presents more innovations than are to be found in any other amusement structure in America. In the one feature of tiling alone it presents unusual facilities. It is so built that in addition to the usual conveniences of the modern stage the special rooms planned for the use of the units can be added to the theatre part for a ceremonial or be shut off when the theatre is devoted to outside enterprises. Our storage and property rooms are an integral part of the theatre proper, and yet they can be shut off from the stage and our property will be safe from the transfer men moving a show in or out.

Even the little matter of cloak room space is figured so that otherwise waste space can be utilized, and when the organ is completely installed it will be the only instrument of size in the world which will permit the organist at the console to judge his tonal effects.

It is the last word in mosque construction, and some of the ideas already have been incorporated into the plans prepared by other temples, for during the progress of the work a number of building committees have visited us and have noted what we have done, to the advantage of their own plans.

When you sit in the Mosque a few nights from now you can take pride in the fact that no temple has a better home. None can have better.

It has been twenty-five years and more since the project of our own mosque was first broached. It has been a long wait, but in return for that waiting we have a far finer building than could have been thought of a quarter of a century ago. We have gained by waiting, but now the wait is over.

At last we are in our own home, the Palace Beautiful.

Dedicatory Services to Be Broadcast

The Dedicatory services of Mecca Temple Mosque on Monday, December 29, 1924, at two o'clock, will be broadcast through the powerful Municipal broadcasting station WNYC, and those of our nobility who are unfortunate enough to be under the weather, or out of the city, should take this opportunity of being present with us in spirit if not in person.

It will be a treat well worth tuning into.

For that matter, the auditorium will not be completed until next Summer. It is impossible to put on the colors. The plaster is dry, but not yet set to the point where the colors will remain permanent and unstained. It will not be until hot weather comes again that we can tone the white walls with their color scheme (already worked out), in which the gay tones of the Orient will be blended into the softer browns which throw those colors into relief. There is still a long road ahead, but we're not tired yet and we shall not quit the job until we can finally turn over to the members a building fully complete.

What It Took to Build the Mosque

Past Potentate Harry C. Arthur Offers an Interesting Compilation of the Figures of the Various Contractors

LOOKING over the immense building which is Mecca Temple Mosque, have you given thought to the materials entering into its construction. Have you any idea of the immense quantity of material? Just before the work was done Past Potentate Harry C. Arthur roughly compiled, with the aid of the various contractors, a list of the materials used.

For example, C. W. Klappert's Sons, Inc., had the carpenter sub-contract. They used 19,665 board feet of oak, 8,430 feet of spruce, 672 feet of pine, 450 feet of ash, 152 feet of birch, 36 feet of chestnut and 33 feet of cypress. But this is not all. They used 1,518 feet of fir panels, 789 feet of oak, 667 feet of birch and 108 square feet of duali. No generous "round figures," these, but the actual quotations. This makes a total of 39,692 board feet.

And here is where this immense quantity of wood went to in a fireproof building. There were 50 window openings, complete with sash and trim; 3,600 feet of base, 3,000 feet of chair rail, 4,200 feet of picture molding, 132 single doors, 8 double doors, 84 sets of jambs, 170 sides of trim, 10 rolling shutters, 63 feet of check room counter, with three gates; 1,148 feet of hat and coat racks, 36 candidates' lockers, 36 Tyler's lockers, 3 office counters, 1 soft drink bar, 4,000 feet of base, riser and nosings for the lodge rooms; 30 register frames in the lodge rooms, 26 pilaster bases, 1 office desk and 1 office counter.

One office window with glass wicket, one set of trap doors, for the stage, one wooden stairway from the eighth to the ninth floors, and three wooden stairways from the main to the mezzanine floors in the lodge rooms. These are the only non-fireproof stairways in the building, and are merely supplemental to the stone and iron stairways outside. There are three sets of Tyler lockers, twelve lockers to each set. There are 900 square feet of wainscoting in the orchestra pit, 308 linear feet of balcony and gallery railing, and 79 feet of nosing, not to forget 125 running feet of base.

The plumbing was supplied by the Alexander Bryant Company and installed under the supervision of Amiel Auber. This includes 22,500 feet of pipe ranging in size from three-fourths of an inch to eight inches. This pipe (more than four miles of it!) required 6,500 fittings and 500 valves. The valves were of brass, but the fittings were brass, black and galvanized iron, according to the requirements. There is a suction tank 25 feet long, and one of 10 feet for the house supply. These require five pumps. There is one 10-horsepower vacuum cleaner. Add 4,000 feet of fire hose and 250 fixtures and you have this little item out of the way.

Baker, Smith & Co. supplied the ventilation, which was installed by George Murphy. The entire building is piped, and there were required 250,000 pounds of galvanized iron, 55,000 pounds of black iron and 4,800 pounds of copper. Add to this 35,000 pounds of fans and you'll realize that the ventilation was rather a weighty problem.

There are seven fans in the outfit. Three are exhausts and four are blowers. The first take out the foul air, which is replaced by the blowers with fresh air, drawn from the roof, heated or cooled and distributed to all parts of the building.

Up in the auditorium dome is a fan eight feet in diameter, which draws the vitiated air and smoke into a duct large enough to drive a passenger car through. This works on the ceiling exhausts. There is another exhaust with two 5-foot 4-inch fans. It requires a 36-horsepower motor. Two other fans supply the fresh air to the supply registers, and the 650 eight-inch mushroom dispensers disposed under the seats of the balcony and gallery. There are 1,002 supply registers in the entire building, the smallest being 8 by 8 inches, to the largest, which is 19 feet 6 inches in diameter. All of the air is filtered through a chamber 48 feet long, containing 285 filter screens.

The system includes the lodge rooms and other apartments in the Administration section, and there are special fans and ducts to take the heat, air and odors from the kitchens in the basement and the upper floor of the Administration side.

There are separate units for the different sections, so that no power is wasted clearing the air of the unoccupied supper room, just because the auditorium is in use.

The air is sent out through two copper

ventilators in the roof of the Administration section and three on the roof of the auditorium. These range in size from 12 feet 6 inches by 11 feet 6 inches to 6 feet 1 inch by 8 feet 2 inches.

The fresh air intake in the dome (you can see this from the northeast corner of Seventh Avenue and 56th Street) is 48 feet wide by 3 feet 6 inches deep.

But remember that the plumbing referred to above does not include the heating. Baker, Smith & Co. supplied 48 tons of radiation, with 9½ miles of pipe, with 2½ tons of hangers, and 82,000 separate fittings in all. The system is governed by 245 valves, exclusive of the radiation valves, and the engineer must know where to find each one. Noble Carman Montross, of Salaam Temple, was the foreman on this job.

Sobel & Kraus did the roofing, and Noble Joseph Sobel, president of the company, took personal charge of the work. The rounded dome is composed of 35,000 pieces of hard burned Spanish tile, every piece made by hand to conform to the curve of the roof. They are set in place with copper nails. Surmounting the dome is the emblem of the order. This finial, to give it the technical name, is 12 feet in diameter at the base and rises to a height of 20 feet. The scimitar measures 11 feet across. The emblem is made of 32-ounce copper, shaped piece by piece from a full-sized clay model. It is the largest crescent emblem made of copper in this country. The weight is carried on a structure of structural steel channels, tees and angles. The flat roof work is 5-ply Barrett waterproofing, over which is laid 6 by 9 by 1 inch promenade tile. All metal work on the roof is of copper, and this includes two copper ventilators over the stage. As required by the Fire and Buildings Departments, these are automatic. If a fire occurs on the stage the asbestos curtain is dropped, ropes which hold the ventilators shut are cut and they open by gravity, keeping the smoke and flame out of the auditorium.

Bob Dunn was superintendent of construction for James Stewart Co., the general contractors. Bob, in case you have forgotten what you already have read in The Meccan, is now a Noble of Mecca Temple and about as white a man as they make. Here are the general items not covered by specific contracts.

It takes cement, of course, and for this 14,000 barrels were used; the equivalent of 56,000 bags. To go with this were 4,326 cubic yards of sand, 1,811 yards of gravel, 1,865 yards of mixtures, 123 yards of grit and 128 tons of limoid, the equivalent of 5,128 bags.

There were 1,767,000 common brick and 143,200 face brick, 240,459 pieces of partition tile in various sizes, and 6,344 pieces of terra cotta; 260,000 feet of lumber were used, mostly for scaffolding, additional to that already enumerated, and 4,510 yards of cinders.

Other little general items are 3,500 pounds of Hydrocide waterproofing powder, and 12,921 pounds of Trucon waterproofing paste. For the concrete 4,140 pieces of reinforcing bars were used, random lengths. These weighed 53,516 pounds, or about 26¾ tons. Bob went easier on the bright wire, using only 13,000 pounds, but he put in 128,475 square feet of wire mesh and 4,200 pieces of toggle hangers. He also used 3,200 pounds of black annealed wire and 170 kegs of nails, assorted sizes.

John Gill had charge of the electrical work for the Walter H. Taverner Corporation. He used 105,535 feet of conduit, ranging from 36,000 feet of half-inch conduit to 2,500 feet of 2½-inch diameter.

There are 2,506 tons of structural steel in the building, and this is held together by about 44,400 rivets. Some of the high lights are:

Distance from the top chord of the roof to top of dome, 36 feet, with a diameter of 88 feet. The main gallery girder is 92 feet long by 10 feet deep. It weighs 65 tons. The two roof trusses, 95 feet above the sidewalk level, are each 105 feet long by 15 feet deep and the pair of them tip the scales at 90 tons. There are eight girders, each 77 feet long by 7 feet deep, with a weight of 32 tons each, or a total of 256 tons, and there are four main truss columns each 120 feet long, weighing 33 tons apiece.

Noble William R. Coppage, of Mecca Temple, had charge of this work.

John Comolli & Son used 661,500 pounds of Rock Wall Neat Cement, 145,900 pounds of Rock Wall finishing plaster, 40,000 pounds of casting plaster, 18,000 pounds of bond plaster, 112,000 pounds Toby finishing lime, 20,000 pounds of Portland cement, and 1,000 tons of sand. John Comolli is a member of Mecca Temple, and his son Charles is going to come in as soon as he qualifies.

The John F. McGowan Marble Company supplied and set the stone. Quantity details are not available, but included in the material are Verde Antique Marble, from the

Lake Champlain district, which is used for base throughout the building, on the treads and risers in the stairways from the auditorium to the galleries and elsewhere.

In the lobby were used imported Belgian black marble in connection with Tracon travertine stone, a calcareous stone quarried in Minnesota.

Roman travertine stone is used for the vestibule on the 56th Street side. This is imported from Italy, where it is quarried in the river beds. This vestibule is ceiled with Botticino marble, also imported from Italy. This stone is also used for the cap on the balustrade and standee rails in the auditorium. Napoleon gray marble, quarried in Missouri, is used for the floor saddles and in the toilet rooms.

The wire lathing was installed under the supervision of Fred de Barger, of the George Holmes Company, Inc. This includes 6,755 pounds of 1½ by 1½ inch channel, 109,020 pounds of 1 by 1⅜ by ⅛ inch channel, and 1,500 pounds by 4-inch channel. Then there were 8,520 pounds of 1 by 3/16-inch flat and 600 pounds of 1-inch angle. On this were set 360 pounds of galvanized lath and 57,372 pounds of lath mesh, with 2,600 pounds of hairpin clips and 2,535 pounds of tie wire. To bind the angles there were used 31,000, or 16,000 pounds of 1 by ⅜-inch bolts, 500 pounds of nails, 2,100 pounds of expansion corner beads, all covered with 60 gallons, or 720 pounds, of paint. This added around 97 tons to the general weight of the building, or 193,982 pounds, if you clamor for exactness.

Galassi & Co., Inc., put in the floorings and the panels in the lodge rooms. There are 18,000 square feet of floor, 3,000 linear feet of base, 2,300 linear feet of treads and 600 square feet of Mosaic panels, the latter for the lodge rooms. If you want to know just what terrazzo floor is, come up and see or drop Harry Arthur a note of inquiry, not forgetting to inclose a return, self-addressed envelope and a private secretary.

The Penn Brass and Bronze Works supplied the brass railing throughout the structure (maybe there's a brass rail on that soft drink bar), as well as the bronze candlesticks and candelabra in the lodge rooms and the two commemorative tablets in the lobby.

The metal doors and trim come from Betz Bros., Inc. There are 300 doors in the building, which, with their jambs, required 53,000 pounds of patent level furniture steel and 10,000 pounds of patent level sheet bronze.

There are 16,652 pieces of terra cotta used on the front and in the lobby, and every piece was specially made for this particular job, each piece being numbered at the factory so that its precise place in the decorative scheme was determined. A special mould had to be made for each individual shape, of which there were several hundred; these moulds being made from sample pieces modeled by sculptors to serve as a design for the mould maker. Ours is the finest example of Polychrone terra cotta on this continent. The material was supplied by the Architectural Terra Cotta Company from its Long Island City plant. Terra cotta is a mixture of special clays with a proportion of "grog" made of broken porcelain and fire clay saggers. The function of this grog is to keep the green clay open and facilitate drying without warping. The clay is ripened before being mixed with the grog and again seasoned before it is sprayed with the proper color and sent to the kiln to be baked.

The face stone is Briar Hill and Buff Mountain sandstone. The former comes from Sherrodsville, Ohio, and the latter from Glenmont, in the same State. In the construction of the Mosque 9,000 cubic feet of Briar Hill and 5,000 cubic feet of Buff Mountain stone were supplied through Arlando Marine, Eastern sales agent.

Taken by and large, it is considerable of a building, and perhaps you'll understand now why the Holding Company kept on asking you to buy bonds and keep on buying. But your bonds bought something well worth while, for all of the material is of the best and fifty years from now your sons and grandsons will be saying that those old-time Meccans knew how to build a mosque, for it will still be as solid as the bedrock of its foundation.

And by the same token, the bonds are not yet all gone. Make your checks payable to Louis N. Donnatin, Secretary, and address him at 130 West 56th Street.

And one last word. Don't get the idea that because there is so much wood in the building it is not fireproof. The flooring, for example, is laid on concrete. It will probably burn if you sit and fan it, but it takes an awful lot of encouragement. And wherever else you find wood you'll find fireproofing right back of it. It would take a couple of barrels of kerosene to start a decent blaze anywhere in the building.

Dec. 29, 1924

5,000 Shriners Here to Dedicate Mosque

Representing virtually every city of consequence in North America, more than five thousand members of the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine are visitors in New York to-day, attending the ceremonies with which Mecca Temple's new $2,000,000 mosque, on Fifty-sixth street, between Sixth and Seventh avenues, is being dedicated.

The delegation, which is the largest that has ever come here to participate in any fraternal gathering, represents upward of 500,000 Shriners, and its members have been arriving since Saturday, many with their families.

For pomp and pageantry the dedication exercises this afternoon are without parallel in the history of fraternal events in this city.

Mecca Temple's renown as the mother of the Shrine has attracted

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5,000 SHRINERS IN CITY TO DEDICATE NEW MOSQUE

Continued from First Page.

some of the most illustrious figures in Masonry in New York, and among those who made the pilgrimage to be present at the consecration of the new edifice are no less than fifty Potentates and Past Potentates.

Activities started this morning with a business session at which only those officially interested were present. This was followed by a parade.

The procession in which Potentates, Divans, bands and uniformed units of visiting temples marched, headed by those from Mecco Temple, started from the Mosque and moved down Fifth avenue to Thirty-fourth street, being viewed by thousands.

WELCOMED BY MAYOR.

At the ceremonies Mayor Hylan will deliver the address of welcome. Governor Smith was to be present to greet the Shriners, but the pressure of duties, including the task of preparing his inaugural speech, necessitated his changing his plans at the last moment. He sent a message of welcome and felicitation, as did Senator Royal S. Copeland, and Arthur S. Tompkins, Past Master of the New York State Grand Lodge of Masons.

The invocation was to be delivered by Bishop Manning, and among the principal speakers, besides Mayor Hylan, were Rosslyn M. Cox, potentate of Mecca Temple; William A. Powan, Grand Master of the State Grand Lodge of Masons; Justice Tompkins, W. Freeland Kendrick, Mayor of Philadelphia, and Past Imperial Potentate of the Shrine.

Ceremonial sessions will be held this evening under the direction of Albert H. Ladner, Jr., of Lulu Temple, Philadelphia.

TEMPLES REPRESENTED.

Included in the temples represented at this session are:

Acca Temple, Richmond, Va., Hugh C. Foster, potentate; Aladdin Temple, Columbus, O., Harry R Allen, potentate; Al Koran Temple, Cleveland, L. Barker Smith, potentate; Almas Temple, Washington, D. C., Harry F. Carey, potentate; Bektash Temple, Concord, N. H., Arthur J. Boutwell, potentate; Boumi Temple, Baltimore, J. Monroe Holland, potentate; Cairo Temple, Rutland, Vt., Roger S. Pike, potentate.

Crescent Temple, Trenton, N. J., Barton T. Fell, potentate; Cyprus Temple, Albany, Aaron P. Krounse, potentate; Damascus Temple, Rochester, Joseph W. McWilliams, potentate; Irem Temple, Wilkes-Barre, Pa., Jerome W. Leverich, potentate; Ismailia Temple, Buffalo, George L. Hager, potentate; Jaffa Temple, Altoona, Pa., John J. McMurray, potentate; Kalurah Temple, Binghamton, Roy G. Pratt, potentate; Karnak Temple, Montreal, Thomas S. Currie, potentate; Karm Temple, Roanoke, Va., Arthur M. Clay, potentate; Khedive Temple, Norfolk, Va., R. B. W. Lohman, potentate; Kismet Temple, Brooklyn, Clifford H. Bradt, potentate; Kora Temple, Lewiston, Me., Walter L. Emerson, potentate; Lu Lu Temple, Philadelphia, Albert H Ladner, Jr., potentate; Media Temple, Watertown, N. Y., George A Stebbins, potentate.

Melha Temple, Springfield, Mass., Charles W. Watson, Potentate; Mocha Temple, London, Can., Jared Vining, Potentate; Moslem Temple, Detroit, Claud W. Moore, Potentate; Mt. Sinai Temple, Montpelier, Vt., Charles A. Davis, Potentate; Oriental Temple, Troy, N. Y., James A Smith, Potentate; Palestine Temple, Providence, R. I., Clarence R. Howe, Potentate; Pyramid Temple, Bridgeport, Conn., Elmer A. Hooper, Potentate; Rajah Temple, Reading Pa., George E. Eisenbrown, Potentate; Rameses Temple, Toronto, Harry L. Glendenning, Potentate.

Salaam Temple, Newark, Frank E. Davenport, Potentate; Sphinx Temple, Hartford, Conn., Wilbur L. Scranton, Potentate; Syria Temple, Pittsburgh, George E. Meyers, Potentate; Tigris Temple, Syracuse, Charles F. Northup, Potentate; Zembo Temple, Harrisburg, Pa., Mercer B. Tate, Potentate; Zem Zem Temple, Erie, Pa., George W. Reichert, Potentate; Zivara Temple, Utica, Dr. Rish O. Lees, Potentate.

TRIBUNE Herald-Trib

Dec. 30, 1924

3,000 Shriners Help Dedicate Mecca Mosque

$2,000,000 Arabic Temple, in West 55th St., Scene of Impressive Rites by Nobles of Masonic Order

Parade Before Services

Mayor of Philadelphia, Murray Hulbert and Justice Tompkins Speak

With religious solemnity, Mecca Temple of the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine dedicated yesterday its new mosque, which stands at the fringe of the theatrical district at 1[illegible] West Fifty-fifth Street. During the long ceremony the original purpose of the order—merry-making—seemed forgotten as emphasis was laid on the higher purpose of charity and mercy, which, in three years, had erected nine hospitals in various cities for indigent crippled children.

More than 3,000 Shriners made a pilgrimage to Mecca—mother of the organization. Every state and every temple was represented at the dedicatory exercises, in the long and colorful parade preceding them and at the ceremonial session conducted last night to initiate a class of four hundred.

Parade Before Ceremonies

The mosque, dedicated to "the glory of God and universal benevolence," is the result of plans and labors of a quarter of a century. To raise the buff building, with its great red-tiled dome, cost more than $2,000,000 and the unremitting efforts of past and present officers.

Crowds lined the curbs along Fifth Avenue when the patrols of the different temples swung along in military precision in the parade which opened the day's exercises. Among them were the Kismet Mounted Guards from Brooklyn—fifteen horsemen in brilliant orange capes and sheik's turbans. Palestine Temple, of Providence; Melha Temple, of Springfield, Mass.; Salaam Temple, of Newark; Crescent Temple, of Trenton, and Mecca Temple all had bands and patrols in line. Marching with them were a mounted police escort, the Police Band, the Police Square Club, the Police Anchor Club, the 16th U. S. Infantry Band, detachments of soldiers and sailors and the potentates and divans of the visiting temples.

W. Freeland Kendrick, Mayor of Philadelphia and past imperial potentate of the national order, reviewed the parade at Fifty-ninth Street and Fifth Avenue. In the stand with him were all the potentates and past potentates.

It was Mayor Kendrick who gave the Mystic Shrine its plan of caring for destitute crippled children, and in tribute to his charity the 2,000 persons who attended the afternoon services in the new mosque cheered him for several minutes. Others spoke during the afternoon, but it was Mayor Kendrick whom the crowd awaited, and it was him alone they cheered.

Murray Hulbert, President of the Board of Aldermen, speaking in place of Mayor Hylan, who is in Atlantic City, gave his time, too, to comment on the children's hospitals. Without such endeavors on the part of fraternal and religious bodies, he said, municipalities could do comparatively little to alleviate the sufferings of unfortunates.

Justice Arthur S. Tompkins, past grand master of Masons in New York State, also commended the philanthropic motives of the organization. He took occasion, while speaking of charity and love for mankind, to call attention to the ideals to which each Shriner pledged himself when becoming a Mason, asking his hearers to keep before them always the tenets of the fraternal faith.

Urges Spirit of Charity

"Radiate a spirit of benevolence," he urged. "Pledges are worthless unless we translate them into good deeds. Most important to every member of the Shrine is this new privilege of expressing an interest in and a sympathy for needy humanity. This temple, of itself, can do no Masonic work. It can render no human service. It is up to each of us to do that. Only as we exemplify the teachings of the Shrine can we justify this service of dedication."

The exercises were presided over by Rosslyn M. Cox, illustrious potentate of Mecca Temple. Invocation was made by the Right Rev. William T. Manning and the benediction was given by the Rev. Joel Blau, of the Temple Beni-El. Caterina Gobi and Ralph Errolle sang.

The symbolic dedication was under the auspices of the Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons of the State of New York. Those taking part were William A. Rowan, grand master; Harold J. Richardson, deputy grand master; Charles H. Johnson, senior grand warden; R. Elliott Owens, junior grand warden; Jacob C. Klinck, grand treasurer; Robert Judson Kenworthy, grand secretary; the Very Rev. Oscar F. R. Treder, grand chaplain, and John J. MacCrum, grand marshal.

At the ceremonial session at night, held in the lodge room, the officers of the imperial council had charge. They are:

Clarence M. Dunbar, imperial potentate; Esten A. Fletcher, imperial chief rabban; Edward R. Gailer, imperial assistant rabban; John A. Morison, imperial high priest and prophet; Christian C. Gerhardt, imperial treasurer; Louis N. Donnatin, imperial recorder; Thomas A. Davis, imperial oriental guide; James R. Watt, imperial marshal; James W. Downing, imperial orator; George Cook Jr., imperial first ceremonial master; William B. Falconer, imperial second ceremonial master; James A. Rogers and Frederick I. Dana, imperial alchemists, and Clarence R. Howe, imperial captain of guards.

The cast for the conferring of the Order of the Mystic Shrine was as follows:

Illustrious Potentate, Rosslyn M. Cox, Mecca Temple; Chief Rabban, Albert H. Ladner Jr., Lu Lu Temple, Philadelphia; Assistant Rabban, George F. Eisenbrown, Rajah Temple, Reading, Pa.; High Priest and Prophet, George E. Meyers, Syria Temple, Pittsburgh; Oriental Guide, Roy G. Pratt, Kalurah Temple, Binghamton, N. Y.; First Ceremonial Master, Charles F. Watson, Melha Temple, Springfield, Mass.; Second Ceremonial Master, Clifford H. Hradt, Kismet Temple, Brooklyn; Marshal, Frank [illegible] Davenport, Salaam Temple, Newark; Captain of the Guard, James A. Smith, Oriental Temple, Troy; Inspired Charge, Hon. W. Freeland Kendrick, Lu Lu Temple, Philadelphia; Director, Harry C. Arthur, Past Illustrious Potentate of Mecca Temple.

New York TIMES
Dec. 30, 1924

SHRINERS DEDICATE MECCA'S NEW HOME

Nobles From All Parts of the Country Here for Opening of $2,500,000 Mosque.

HIGH MASONS AT CEREMONY

Arab Patrols and Mounted Guard Features of Parade—8,000 at Notable Event.

Shriners from all parts of the country attended the dedication of the new Mosque of Mecca Temple in Fifty-fifth Street, between Sixth and Seventh Avenues, yesterday. More than 3,500 attended the ceremonies, and before the close of the day's program, 8,000 Nobles were participating in the event.

Before the dedication ceremonies there was a parade in which were the Arab patrols of six Temples, led by Mecca Temple's band. One of the largest delegations was from Lu Lu Temple of Philadelphia, whose Past Potentate, Mayor W. Freeland Kendrick, former Imperial Potentate, with Potentate Rosslyn M. Cox of Mecca, and visiting Potentates and Past Potentates reviewed the pageant at Fifth Avenue and Fifty-ninth Street. The picturesque costumes of the patrols, the mounted guard of Kismet Temple of Brooklyn and a limousine decorated in gold and green with desert scenes, in which rode high officials of Rajah Temple of Reading, Pa., were features of the parade.

The line of march was from Fifty-sixth Street and Seventh Avenue west to Broadway, south to Forty-fourth Street, east to Fifth Avenue, north to the reviewing stand and terminating in front of the new mosque.

The dedication ceremonies were held on the great stage of the mosque, scenically set for the occasion, and were conducted under the auspices of the Grand Lodge of Masons of New York State. The officers officiating were Grand Master William A. Rowan, Deputy Grand Master Harold J. Richardson, Senior Grand Warden Charles H. Johnson, Junior Grand Warden R. Elliott Owens, Grand Treasurer Jacob C. Klinck, Grand Secretary Robert Judson Kenworthy, Grand Chaplain the Rev. Oscar F. R. Treder and Grand Marshal John J. MacCrum.

Bishop William T. Manning offered the invocation and the Rev. Joel Blau pronounced the benediction. Murray Hulbert, President of the Board of Aldermen, representing the Mayor, welcomed the Shriners in an address in which he praised the work of the order, especially its activities in behalf of the afflicted. He referred to the Shrine's aid to crippled children and the establishment of hospitals for their care as one of the greatest works accomplished by any organization.

Past Potentate Kendrick was greeted with cheers. In his address he declared the Shrine was the first great fraternal organization to extend a helping hand to crippled children, regardless of race, creed or color. "It is to that work," he said, "that the Shrine has dedicated its future." He referred to the new mosque as a "temple of babies' smiles."

Potentate Cox and Justice Arthur S. Tompkins, Past Grand Master of Masons in the State of New York, both spoke of the benevolent work and the world-wide brotherhood of the Shrine. Justice Tompkins then declared the new Mosque was dedicated in the name of the "great Jehovah, to the cause of human service."

The lower floor and balcony of the mosque were filled during the exer[illegible] Mayors from fifty cities [illegible] were there. A musical program [illegible] selections by Ralph Errolle, tenor, Caterina Gobbi, soprano, and an orchestra conducted by R. Giagliano.

The ceremonial session in the eve[illegible] proved that the new mosque [illegible] equipped with all the things necess[illegible] to give aid to pilgrims on their pa[illegible] across the hot desert sands. There [illegible] 400 of them, and the order was confe[illegible] by a divan made up of potentates arranged under the direction of Po[illegible]tate Albert H. Ladner Jr. of Lu [illegible] Temple.

The new mosque, which cost $2,[illegible] embodies in its construction many ideas in planning and workmanship in its interior, as well as exterior, [illegible] rivals the work of the ancient builders of the Orient. Where the Arabian bu[illegible] uses kalsomine the builders of this [illegible] York mosque have used imperish[illegible] terra cotta in colored ornamentation found in the south front of the buil[illegible] The huge dome is made up of terra [illegible] tile, and is surmounted by an im[illegible] scimitar and crescent, symbol of [illegible] Shrine.

The north side of the mosque is two stories high, and contains three l[illegible] rooms for the use of the 12,000 mem[illegible] of the temple. The Oriental idea is [illegible]ried out here also in the tall, nar[illegible] doors, slit windows and bronze lanter[illegible]

Mecca Temple was organized in [illegible] city in 1872 with thirteen charter m[illegible]bers. It is the parent temple of [illegible] Shrine in America.

1/10/41

ITZSTEIN OPERA IN A CENSOR ROW

s Bans Permit for Hall in Which Left-Wing Work Is Produced Weekly

LLS ACTION TECHNICAL

Denies It Was Prompted by ature of Show—Producers Charge 'Gag' Attempt

o for an Answer," the con- rsial left-wing opera by Marc tein, was not expected by its nsors last night to give a per- nance next Sunday night be- se Paul Moss, License Commis- er, unexpectedly found that a Temple, 133 West Fifty-fifth et, the scene of performances, not have a theatre license and alleged building violations pre- ted the issuance of a permit. opera has only one perform- e a week.

he committee sponsoring the w, which includes Bennett Cerf, lan Hellman, Lincoln Kirstein, ur Kober and Herman Shum- charged that Mr. Moss was at- pting to censor the show be- of its context and noted that ears regular dramatic produc- s, including the Alfredo Sal- operas last Spring, had been ted at the temple without rference by the city authorities. t. Blitzstein, whose earlier work, e Cradle Will Rock," met with censorship in 1937 by officials of the WPA Federal Theatre, said that he intended to defy the action of Mr. Mass and give a performance in any event. The opera had its premiere last Sunday at a showing for the benefit of the American Rescue Ship Mission, from which, it was disclosed Monday, Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt resigned after the State Department revoked its license to collect relief funds for application abroad. The committee said it was told of the license difficulties on Tuesday night.

Mr. Moss denied that he was seeking to censor the show and said that he had tried personally to have a license issued, but that officials of the Building Department had found violations that tied his hands. He said he had returned yesterday the temple's check for $250 for a license, and added that policemen and firemen would see to it that Mr. Blitzstein did not perform in an unlicensed theatre.

Mr. Moss said that he was unaware that opera had been presented before at the Temple and that for a period of a month he had been working on the matter of a license for the premises.

Joseph Sterling, attorney for the management of Mecca Temple, acknowledged that operas had previously been presented, but said that the objections made by Mr. Moss carried "some substance" and that he was convinced that the commissioner was "acting in good faith." He declined to comment on the charge of censorship raised by the committee.

When informed of the charges of censorship, Mr. Moss said:

"No. No. No. No. I have been anxious to get the license for them. To have the place open means entertainment for the public and reserve for the city."

Mr. Moss said that the principal violation was that the chairs were not screwed down to the floor, as required in theatres, lest they be overturned in the event of a panic.

New York TIMES
Aug. 13, 1941

OPERA AT MECCA TEMPLE

Building to Be Converted by Fall —Art Center at Shrine Temple

Max Rabinoff, opera and musical impresario, announced yesterday that a group of real estate men who last year bought the Mecca Temple and Shrine Temple properties on West Fifty-fifth and Fifty-sixth Streets, between Sixth and Seventh Avenues, would convert the former into an opera house and the latter into a center for cultural and artistic activities at an expenditure of $200,000.

The project should get under way immediately and be completed in October, in time for 1941-42 bookings, according to Mr. Rabinoff, who has been named general manager. The two buildings are to be known as the Cosmopolitan Opera House and the People's Art Center, respectively.

Later, Mr. Rabinoff said, a permanent popular-priced opera company will be formed which should provide opportunity to many young American artists.

9/2/41

Mecca Temple Bid In By the City on Lien

Mecca Temple, opened about seventeen years ago under auspicious circumstances as a fraternal meeting-place and musical center, was bid in for taxes yesterday by the city.

The eight-story and fifteen-story structure at 131-35 West Fifty-fifth Street and 124-30 West Fifty-sixth Street, with its striking domed roof, dining halls, lodge rooms and an auditorium seating nearly 5,000, was auctioned by Ralph W. Long to satisfy a claim of $622,543 and a tax lien of about $193,000. It was knocked down on a bid of $100,000. The action was brought by the city against the 130 West Fifty-sixth Street Corporation. The City Treasurer had been acting as receiver of rents for several months.

The building was erected by James Stewart & Co. for the Mecca Temple Holding Company. H. P. Knowles was architect, with Clinton & Russell as successor architects. The main auditorium was dedicated in 1925 with a musical program under Sousa's direction.

New York TIMES
Aug. 13, 1943

PLAN MUSIC CENTER AT MECCA TEMPLE

Mayor and Spokesmen for the Arts Discuss Proposal Originated by Morris

CITY NOW OWNS BUILDING

Leaders of Stage, Concert and Opera Fields Welcome the New Project

Tentative plans to convert Mecca Temple, 133 West Fifty-fifth Street, into a music and art center for presentation of opera, concerts, plays and ballets at popular prices were discussed last night in Mayor La Guardia's office by a committee representing all phases of the musical and dramatic arts.

The city acquired the structure by tax foreclosure in September and has already leased the basement, containing one of the largest ballrooms in New York, for $1,000 [illegible] would it decide to sponsor the proposed music center.

Council President Newbold Morris, originator of the music center, said that subcommittees would be named today and that steps to organize a membership corporation to operate the enterprise would be considered next week. It is planned to make the project self-sustaining and it will be directed by a group of citizens associated with music, drama and the arts.

The building contains an auditorium that can seat 2,800 persons. There are several floors devoted to lodge rooms, each equipped with electric pipe organs and available for rehearsal purposes or for chamber music recitals.

Cooperation Is Complete

"The plan has the complete cooperation of all who attended the meeting," Mr. Morris said. "The WPA music projects, now terminated, proved that there were large numbers of music-lovers in the city who would gladly patronize opera, concerts and plays if the prices were brought within their means. They can't afford to go to the Metropolitan or the Philharmonic at their box office prices."

Mr. Morris said that spokesmen for the New York stage, opera and concert fields have shown enthusiasm for the project.

Mr. La Guardia, who was present at the meeting, expressed the hope that within the next five years the city would have its own "temple of art."

"It is the awakening of a dream," he said, "and not the fulfillment of a dream. I hope my successor, five years from now, will have a temple of art. We will tell you more about the music center as soon as we know more about it."

Mr. Morris declared that the project should be launched now. If there is any delay, he said, it might be postponed for many years.

Present at the Meeting

Those at the meeting, besides the Mayor and Mr. Morris, were George Sloan, Morton Baum and John Erskine, representing the Metropolitan Opera Company; Maxwell Hahn, representing Marshall Field of the Philharmonic Society; Oscar Wagner, dean of the Juilliard Graduate School of Music; Lawrence Tibbett and Mrs. Blanche Witherspoon, American Guild of Musical Artists; Elmer Rice, president of Playwrights Producing Company; Mrs. Arthur M. Reis, League of Composers.

Also Ira A. Hirschman, New Friends of Music; Jacon Rosenberg and William Feinberg, Local 802, American Federation of Musicians; Jacob Potofsky, Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America; Luigi Antonini, Italian Dress and Waist Makers Union; Alex Rose, United Hatters Cap and Millinery Workers; Bernard Conal, C. I. O. organizational director; John Golden, Howard S. Cullman, Controller Joseph D. McGoldrick, License Commissioner Paul Moss; Morris S. Novik, director of WNYC, and Lee T. Smith of the Real Estate Bureau of the Board of Estimate.

NEW GROUP TO GIVE OPERA, PLAYS HERE

City Center of Music, Drama Is a Privately Sponsored, Non-Profit Corporation

40-WEEK SEASON PLANNED

Popular Priced Entertainment at Mecca Temple Will Be Started in Fall

Organization of the City Center of Music and Drama, Inc., a privately sponsored non-profit corporation that will provide opera, concerts, plays and ballets at popular prices in the city-owned structure at 131-135 West Fifty-fifth Street formerly known as Mecca Temple, was announced yesterday by Mayor Fiorello H. La Guardia.

Mayor La Guardia disclosed that the project, sponsored by prominent persons in the field of music, opera, drama and organized labor, had already been underwritten to the extent of $60,750 and planned to open its first season in the fall, with the expectation that a season of forty weeks a year would be established.

A certificate of incorporation, signed by forty-six individuals, has been approved by a justice of the New York Supreme Court and by the State Department of Education, the Mayor said, and filed with the Secretary of State at Albany. The directors will meet today in Mayor La Guardia's office to consider plans for getting the new enterprise under way and arranging a program for the fall season.

Tentative plans for the project were first announced in March by Council President Newbold Morris, who had personal charge of organizing the new center, including the raising of sufficient funds to get it off to a sound start.

Mayor Praises Project

"New York has become, by force of circumstances, the world center of creative and interpretive art," the Mayor said. "It is my belief that as many as 1,000,000 of our fellow-citizens do not have the opportunity of enjoying the best dramatic and musical productions simply because the prevailing box-office prices are out of the range of their personal incomes. Trade unions, whose representatives have signed the certificate of incorporation, have a total membership of more than 500,000 men and women. It is my hope that we will carry on a forty-week season each year with a diversified program to include music, drama, ballet and allied forms of stage entertainment. Of course it will take some time to complete all necessary details. It is planned, however, to start providing concerts, opera and other entertainment the coming season."

The building in which the City Center of Music and Drama will be housed was acquired by the city in foreclosure proceedings arising from nonpayment of taxes. It is expected that the corporation will receive a lease at a rental sufficient to cover carrying charges for the structure. The building, which runs through from Fifty-fifth Street to Fifty-sixth Street, contains a large auditorium and many rehearsal halls and studios, as well as much other floor space easily adaptable for educational purposes. The large basement has already been leased to the operator of a ballroom. Mayor La Guardia said that several schools of music, drama and the ballet will join the venture as subtenants of the building.

Underwriters of Center

Giving full credit to Council President Morris for getting the project started, Mayor La Guardia disclosed that the incorporators had provided 360,750 of their own money to underwrite the venture.

Among the organizations and individuals taking part in the underwriting were: Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America, Morton Baum, Howard S. Cullman, Clarke G. Dailey, the Dramatists Guild, Marshall Field, John Golden, the Greater New York Council of Industrial Unions, Edmond A. Guggenheim and Mrs. Lytle Hull.

Also the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, Erich Leinsdorf, George V. McLaughlin, American Federation of Musicians, Local 802; the Pepsi-Cola Company, Mrs. Ruth B. Pratt, Mrs. Arthur M. Reis, John D. Rockefeller Jr., Mrs. Myron C. Taylor, the Jewish Labor Committee, Workmen's Circle, United Hebrew Trades, Joint Board of United Millinery Workers, Maurice Wertheim, Gerald Warburg, Mrs. David M. Levy, Walter W. Naumburg, Richard W. Lawrence and J. Robert Rubin.

The last of forty-six incorporators includes the names of the underwriters, or their representatives. It includes also Mayor La Guardia, Controller Joseph D. McGoldrick, Council President Morris and a group of individuals prominent in operatic, dramatic and musical circles. Among these are Lillian Gish, Eert Lytell, Robert Edmond Jones, John Hammond, Elmer Rice, Paul Robeson, Deems Taylor and Lawrence Tibbett.

HART SAYS INQUIRY WILL COST NOTHING

Investigation of La Guardia Regime Will Save Big Sum for City, He Asserts

$40,000 VOTED TO CARRY ON

$65,000 Appropriated Despite Protest for Remodeling Old Mecca Temple

Councilman Walter R. Hart, Brooklyn Democrat, who heads the committee investigating the administration of Mayor Fiorello H. La Guardia, told the Board of Estimate yesterday that the committee's activities would cost the city nothing, would save it "hundreds of thousands of dollars" and would lay a solid foundation for continuing the inquiry beyond Dec. 31, the date on which the committee's authority expires.

Councilman Hart's statement, made in reply to a criticism of the commitee by Councilman Gertrude W. Klein, Laborite member from the Bronx, was made just before the Board of Estimate voted the committee an appropriation of $40,000 to cover its expenses through Dec. 31. Mrs. Klein opposed the appropriation as "a ridiculous, phony, arrant and senseless waste of taxpayers' money."

Declaring that the committee was not engaged in character assassination, but was conducting a legitimate investigation on the basis of charges and suspicion, Councilman Hart said that all the information thus far made public about its private hearings had come from Mayor La Guardia and his subordinates and that none of it had "leaked" from the committee itself.

Will Press Investigation

"The La Guardia administration," he said, "has been trying to act as the committee's press agent. Commissioners and others whom we have questioned have run to the Mayor's office and told what they testified to at private hearings. In some cases they have told all, but in others they haven't, because they didn't dare to. We will go right ahead with our private hearings and when the time comes we will let the public know what goes on, not by press releases from the Mayor's office but at public hearings through evidence given under oath."

"I've been here longer t... of you," Mr. Hart told th... bers, "and you know that I'm a fool or a dope. We have al... saved the city $112,000 tha... Sanita Lodge welfare fund o... Sanitation Department has s... to repay the city for city la... materials. We'll save the city ... dreds of thousands of dollars ...

"This investigation will co... city nothing. You heard no ... tests when millions were as... pay for the Seabury, the To... the Amen investigations. C... be that it's all right to spend ... lions to investigate Democrat... not all right to spend a m... $40,000 to investigate the ... side?"

Says Carey Informed May...

Mr. Hart said that even i... case of Sanita Hills the com... made nothing public until ... Sanitation Commissioner Wi... F. Carey, at a private hearing ... testified that he had told the ... or that the committee knew ... about the situation there. ... missioner Carey, according to ... Hart, said that he had no ... tion of paying back any of ... $112,000 expended by the ci... the Sanita Hills project at H... N. Y., and that the decision t... it back was made after the ... mittee had dug into the matt...

An item on the board's cale... upon which action was de... until Sept. 23, revealed that ... had been made to expedite r... ment of the $112,000 to the ... A total of $55,000 has alread... repaid and it is now propos... make a payment of $40,00... Sept. 1, 1944, and payment... $25,000 on each Sept. 1 there...

Mr. Hart and the investig... committee surprised the b... asking that it delay action ... resolution appropriating $... for remodeling and repairing ... old Mecca Temple building ... West Fifty-fifth Street for ... a home for the newly org... City Center of Music and D... Inc. The appropriation was v... with Borough Presidents ... Cashmore of Brooklyn, Jam... Lyons of the Bronx and Jam... Burke of Queens dissenting.

Commissioner of Purcha... bert Pleydell disclosed that ... vestigating committee had ... poenaed his checking account ... that of George J. Basso, food ... for the department. Both of... have recently been questione... private hearings of the com... concerning their activities ... taining supplies of meat for ... institutions.

"Well, I hope the boys ... themselves," Mr. Pleydell said.

The board approved the p... application of William F. Bri... former Congressman and ex-P... dent of the old Board of Alder...

New York TIMES
Sept. 13, 1943

JERSEY MAN HEADS CITY MUSIC CENTER

Naming of Harry Friedgut to Direct Cultural Project Announced by Mayor

MANAGED NEWARK OPERA

Starting of Programs in Old Mecca Temple on Nov. 1 Now Is Objective

Mayor Fiorello H. La Guardia announced yesterday, in his weekly radio broadcast, the appointment of Harry Friedgut of Maplewood, N. J., as managing director of the City Center of Music and Drama, Inc., the non-profit organization planning to bring popular-priced dramatic, concert, operatic and ballet performances to many thousands of New Yorkers.

Mr. Friedgut, who will assume his duties on Oct. 4, will direct activities at the city-owned building at 135 West Fifty-fifth Street, formerly known as Mecca Temple, where the music center programs will be presented. It is hoped that remodelling of the structure, at a cost of $63,000 to the city, will be completed in time to make possible the opening of a program season about Nov. 1.

Mayor La Guardia said that Mr. Friedgut was the unanimous choice of the executive committee of the City Center of Music and Drama and that he was selected after a thorough search for an executive experienced in presenting popular-priced cultural entertainment to the public.

Since 1938 Mr. Friedgut has been managing director of the Griffith Music Foundation of Newark. He supervised its first grand opera festival.

Born in Saskatchewan, Canada, in 1901, he is a graduate of the Regina Normal School and Queens University at Kingston, Ont. He took post-graduate courses at the University of Michigan and holds a degree of Master of Arts from the New York University School of Education. In 1927 he became an American citizen. He was educational director of the Young Men's and Young Women's Hebrew Associations for ten years and then became their executive director.

HEADS CITY CENTER

Harry Friedgut

New York TIMES
Sept.24, 1943

MUSIC CENTER GETS A REVOCABLE PERMIT

Voted by Board of Estimate for New City Auditorium

The Board of Estimate voted yesterday to grant a revocable permit to the City Center of Music and Drama, Inc., to occupy the premises at 131 West Fifty-fifth Street, formerly known as Mecca Temple, to be used for the production of concert, operatic, ballet and dramatic performances at popular prices. The permit runs until June 30, 1944, and is revocable upon thirty days' notice.

The City Center of Music and Drama, Inc., was recently organized as a non-profit membership corporation, with the support of Mayor Fiorello H. La Guardia and Council President Newbold Morris. The permit was voted over the objection of a spokesman for the City Council committee now investigating the La Guardia administration.

Because of lack of priorities to obtain necessary materials the planned remodelling of the building has been delayed and there is little likelihood that any performances can be staged before mid-November.

The permit voted by the Board of Estimate requires a rental payment equal to eleven-twelfths of the taxes formerly collected on the property, or aproximately $27,000, for the period from Oct. 1 to June 30. It also calls for payment to the city of 50 per cent of the net income of the corporation. Another requirement is that the Board of Estimate and its real estate director approve the fees, rentals and other charges made by the corporation in connection with any activities conducted in the building.

New York TIMES
Oct. 20, 1943

City Music Center Is Named

The New York City Center is the name that has been selected for the hall the City Center of Music and Drama, Inc., will use in providing cultural entertainment at popular prices, Mayor Fiorello H. La Guardia announced yesterday. The building, at 130 West Fifty-sixth Street, was formerly known as Mecca Temple.

New York TIMES
Dec.7, 1943

City Venture in Show Business Evokes Protests on Broadway

Civic Center at Mecca Temple Is Called 'Unfair Competition'—Board of Theatre League to Consider Case

The board of governors of the League of New York Theatres, organization of Broadway producers, will meet at 2:30 P. M. Thursday to consider protests made by some of the league's members against the New York City Civic Center at Mecca Temple.

James F. Reilly, the league's executive secretary, said that some producers regarded the center, which opens Saturday night, as "unfair competition." The gist of the complaints is that the center, operating at a $1.65 top, plans to offer attractions that will compete with Broadway productions that have both higher admission fees and greater operating costs.

Mr. Reilly declined to predict what, if any, formal action the league might take.

The protests were described as "ridiculous" by Howard S. Cullman, chairman of the center's program committee, who also has helped to finance numerous Broadway productions. He noted that "Susan and God," with Gertrude Lawrence; "Porgy and Bess" and "The Patriots," the three shows booked for the center, already had completed extensive commercial Broadway engagements.

Mr. Cullman said that the theatrical unions in particular have cooperated with the center to make the presentations possible.

He noted that the center was sponsored by a nonprofit corporation, consisting of private individuals, labor unions and other civic groups, and not by the city itself. The corporation will pay to the city $26,000 a year, the equivalent of normal taxes on Mecca Temple. The city took over Mecca Temple under foreclosure proceedings.

Mr. Cullman also stressed that the city would receive 50 per cent of any profits, the balance being used for operating expenses and to pay off the original investment of $75,000, which was privately underwritten.

"Nobody can make any money out of the center," he added.

New York TIMES
Nov. 30, 1943

CITY MUSIC CENTER OPENS TICKET DRIVE

Participating Groups to Get 20% Off on Coupons, in Plan to Build Wide Audience

A coupon plan to attract the widest possible audience to the City Center of Music and Drama, which will open Dec. 11 with a concert by the Philharmonic-Symphony Society Orchestra, was outlined yesterday to representatives of leading civic, welfare, labor, cultural and philanthropic groups by Harry Friedgut, managing director, at a meeting at the Hotel Astor.

The project itself was described by Mayor La Guardia as "the first attempt to make music and art self-supporting in New York," but he warned the 300 persons there that they could expect "no fancy trimmings." He glowingly outlined the programs in prospect and pledged that "no performance will be offered for the sole purpose of filling a vacant date. Every show will have to measure up to a high artistic standard."

Mr. Friedgut explained that the coupons would be offered to the participating organizations in strips of from one to five. Each ticket will have a face value of $1 and may be redeemed at the box-office at any time toward the purchase of seats. The groups buying blocks of tickets will receive a 20 per cent discount. Trade unions only may pass this saving on to their members. Each organization is being asked to sell at least $1,000 worth of coupons.

The Mayor suggested that special shows starting at 5:30 P. M. be given for the benefit of working people who could thereby save as much as two hours traveling time. He described the center, at 131 West Fifty-fifth Street, as a comfortable building, with good acoustics and perfect visibility, and hailed its being as "a symptom of the changing times."

Newbold Morris, President of the City Council and chairman of the board of directors of the project, reviewed the steps that led to its formation and said: "Its immediate success is assured because with millions of visitors here they've got to go somewhere to get out of the rain."

Then he predicted that its high standards would mean continued success for years to come.

Dec. 12, 1943

CITY CENTER OPENS

And Mr. Golden Has a Few Words to Say About the New Venture

By IRVING SPIEGEL

MAYOR LA GUARDIA'S pet project, the City Center of Music and Drama, 133 West Fifty-fifth Street—not so long ago known as Mecca Temple—tomorrow night will usher into its 2,800-seat auditorium, the John Golden production of "Susan and God," the first in a scheduled list of choice theatrical offerings that have packed the Broadway theatres in the not-too-distant past.

The town's theatre-minded may view the Rachel Crothers hit at evening prices ranging from 85 cents to $1.65, and matinees—Wednesday and Saturday—from 55 cents to $1.65, with no less than Gertrude Lawrence in the leading role, supported by Conrad Nagel and most of the original cast. It will have a one-week run.

Non-Profit Theatre

For the unenlightened, the Golden production opened in the fall of 1937 and ran successfully for nine months, ending only when Miss Lawrence left for London to take a vacation. No sooner had the Mayor organized his non-profit corporation of forty-six persons of diversified interests—total investment to date, $70,000 and more to come—than he communicated with Mr. Golden. Mr. Golden, who is known to be a persuasive gentleman himself, was all for the theatrical project.

Out of the storehouse came "Susan and God." Miss Lawrence signed her contract. Mr. Golden will not receive any profits. What is more, he repainted the sets. What is most important, the Broadway producer firmly believes in a "governmentally subsidized theatre, that is a People's Theatre, run by the people for the people in the sense of its being operated at such low prices as is possible when the grim necessity of making a profit is removed."

Subsidy Needed

Mr. Golden says that the "theatre is as much an institution of culture as our libraries and to deny to the theatre the kind of subsidies which libraries receive is to place the theatre unfairly outside the culture category." He favors a subsidized theatre for less altruistic reasons. He believes that a governmental theatre, operated at low prices, would serve to educate a constantly growing theatre-going public. Young people, he maintains, who would come to a municipal or national theatre that offered good shows at 50 cents would develop a taste for theatre-going which would make them subsequently into $3.30 ticket buyers.

Russian Example

"Also in addition to training audiences in an appreciation of the theatre, a national or city stage organization would develop and train people for the other side of the footlights; it could afford to and would have to run an acting school which would incubate players and dramatists for both its own stage and for the commercial stage."

He says the example provided "by the splendid accomplishments of the Russian state-subsidized theatres during the war and before the war is one that I think we ought to follow; they have developed great actors and playwrights and made beautiful productions in peace and geared their theatre for the war by giving tens of thousands of performances before the fighting men and women."

Other Plays

Mr. Golden is not one for applying the soft pedal. For instance: "The closer we come to a meeting point between their communist ideals and our capitalistic ideals, the sooner we shall reach a finer kind of theatre in both countries."

As for the Center's theatrical list, Dec. 20 will see the opening of the Playwrights' Company's "The Patriots," with Walter Hampden, fresh from a long road run; on Dec. 29, the CIO-sponsored musical extravaganza, "March On With Johnny," will open and run until Feb. 20. "Porgy and Bess," full Broadway cast and now on the road, will invade the Center on Feb. 28. And Newbold Morris, director of the non-profit group, promises other outstanding attractions.

NEW YORK TIMES
Jan. 9, 1944

PLAN FOR A NEW ITY CENTER

By ROGER La FETRA

THE facade of a magnificent new City Center theatre, seating 3,000 or 4,000 persons, may in the not distant future se over on the northwest corner Columbus Circle facing Central rk across the way. Such a thea-, although with no actual site t determined on, was envisioned other day by Mayor La Guardia an interview in which he dis-sed the prospects and plans of City Center, now that the ship s been launched and is safely to sea.

The projected Center, while not ming at any such pretentiousness the old Century Theatre, still ould be large enough easily to e satisfactory presentations of ese big shows, and to seat the diences which, judging from the atistics of the first season, may expected to patronize the City nter in future seasons. Particu-rly, this would provide a concert ll big enough for Dr. Stokowski's hestra. Above all, it would be visible and impressive symbol of hat the City Center, as Mayor La uardia has conceived it, stands r.

o Date Set

Mr. La Guardia made it clear, wever, that it was still impos-ble to say how soon the theatre uld get under way. Other ojects already occupy the May-'s attention, and will have to be rther advanced before the thea-e plan can be taken up.

"You will write a story in five inutes," Mr. La Guardia said, "of hat it has taken me ten years to t started. We began with a reak of bad luck. I first ap-roached, in connection with the neral City Center idea, the late tto Kahn. He was interested, but died before anything had been one. I next approached Felix War-rg, who also was interested, but ho also died before we had got ything actually started. Then I en spoke to the late Arthur Bris-ne, who proposed to give $5,000,-0 toward such a project. He died, o. Later I talked to Mrs. Henry eckinridge. Then the World's ir came up to interrupt the City nter plans, and finally the World ar. Now, at last, however, the a has become a reality.

"The financial showing of the st season is cause for particular tisfaction," the Mayor continued. The project escaped a deficit and nally made $841.77. And this "In his recent proclamation of Music Week, Governor Dewey asserted that the widespread hearing and production of good music in this country had been 'brought about in a manner befitting a free people, neither by Government regimentation nor by Government subvention.' The Governor was in error. I can point to one case where there has been Government subvention—through the action of Governor Dewey himself—and that is the Metropolitan Opera Association. The subsidy there takes the form of a tax exemption on the association's property actually used for the production of opera. In the 1944-45 season, this tax-exemption subsidy will amount to $96,854.10. The bill granting this aid was passed last year and signed by Governor Dewey. Of course, you see, there are cases where Government subsidy is needed, and no doubt the Metropolitan's box holders do need such help in order to carry their burden."

Mr. La Guardia stressed the purpose of the City Center, which is to serve "those otherwise unprovided for" with cultural entertainment. This, he said, was being done in making available the best in opera, instrumental music and new plays for great numbers of people who were unable to afford the usual prices.

In closing, Mayor La Guardia paid a tribute to the work of Newbold Morris, President of the City Council, who also is chairman of the board of directors of the City Center.

"He stands behind and does the work," the Mayor said, "while I take the bows."

New York TIMES
Oct. 21, 1944

FACTORIES TO RISE ON THE WEST SIDE

Park & Tilford Files for Two in 43d and 44th Streets —Park Ave. Project

Plans for the post-war construction of two large ten-story factory and storage buildings with offices for sites on West Forty-third and Forty-fourth Streets were filed by the Park & Tilford Import Company yesterday with the Department of Housing and Buildings. The estimated cost is $1,080,00.

One structure, on a site 125 by 200 feet at 541-53 West Forty-third Street and 542 West Forty-fourth Street will cost $755,000. The other, on a plot 95 by 100 feet at 580-88 Eleventh Avenue and 556-58 West Forty-fourth Street, will cost $325,000. Irving Kudrof is the architect.

for a $500,000 apartment building on a plot 60 by 115 feet at the southeast corner of Park Avenue and Seventieth Street by the 1150 Park Avenue Corporation, of which Louis Brown is president. This nineteen story and penthouse structure was designed by Andrew R. Fritz, architect, of Rockville Centre.

The City of New York filed for alterations in the New York City Center of Music and Drama at 131-135 West Fifty-fifth Street and 126-130 West Fifty-sixth Street to cost $8,639. The aleration will convert a banquet hall and kitchen to offices for the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo.

New York TIMES
Sept. 22, 1944

CITY SETS UP FUND FOR STORM DAMAGE

$375,000 Allotted by Estimate Board to Cover Repairs to Trees and Sidewalks

The Board of Estimate made available yesterday to the Park Department and the Presidents of four boroughs a total of $375,000 to be used to repair damage done to trees and sidewalks by the recent hurricane. The funds will come from accruals and various surplus funds and will be augmented, if necessary, by additional appropriations.

To the Park Department $200,000 was allotted to cover the cost of damage to 30,000 trees, of which about 15,000 were in the parks and the rest along streets. The borough allocations were as follows:

Queens, $70,000; Brooklyn, $50,000; Bronx, $30,000; Richmond, $25,000. The Park Department had asked for $360,000, the Bronx for $100,000 and Brooklyn for $70,000. Richmond made no specific request. Edgar J. Nathan Jr., Borough President of Manhattan, said the damage to sidewalks in the borough was small enough that repairs could be financed out of available funds.

Sidewalks to Be Repaired

The money allocated to the Borough Presidents will be spent without public letting and will be used almost entirely for sidewalk repairs. The Borough Presidents, at an executive meeting of the board held in Mayor La Guardia's office, disclosed that the uprooting of thousands of trees by the hurricane had wrecked large areas of sidewalk. The city's liability to repair the damage without cost to abutting property owners was clear, they said.

The board approved the issuance of $80,000 in serial bonds and tax notes for preliminary construction work to remodel the old Board of Education building at 500 Park Avenue for post-war use as a veterans' center. The board also approved $68,000 worth of contracts in connection with this project. Preferences for necessary material under these contracts have been granted by the WPB.

The veterans' center project was disclosed by the Mayor on May 30, in his message vetoing a City Council deletion of a $350,000 "miscellaneous" item from his 1944-45 executive budget. The center, he declared, would be used during the demobilization period after the war to provide rest rooms, offices and other conveniences for discharged men and women and those awaiting discharge.

Aid for Veterans

At the center they will be aided in preparing applications and will have opportunity for consultation with prospective employers and liaison with Federal Government agencies. The physical preparations alone, the Mayor said, would use up a large part of the $350,000 appropriation and he forecast that the amount would have to be increased.

The $350,000 appropriation remained in the Mayor's budget when the Council was unable to override his veto of its deletion of the item.

The board also appropriated $30,000 for improvements and repairs at the City Center of Music and Drama at 131-35 West Fifty-fifth Street. Newbold Morris, Council President, said after the meeting that the money was needed to care for a number of tenants who had taken space in the building. Among these, he added, were the Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and the Theatre Arts Magazine. Already, he disclosed, more than $30,000 in rents was available, more than covering the amount of taxes formerly annually assessed against the property. To that extent, he declared, the financial burden of presenting plays, concerts and other entertainment at the center would be decreased.

Mr. Morris also disclosed that Artists for Victory would soon set up on the mezzanine floor of the building an ever-changing art exhibit where, for a small hanging fee, little-known painters could display their work.

New York TIMES
May 24, 1944

City Center Reports $844 Profit During First Year of Its Operation

Mayor Says Venture Into Show Business 'No Longer an Experiment' — Coy on Future, Has 'Ambitious Plans'

Mayor La Guardia enthusiastically declared yesterday afternoon that the New York City Center of Music and Drama was "no longer an experiment" after announcement was made that the city's venture in the show business had shown a profit of $844.77 on its initial year of operation.

Speaking informally after attending the first annual meeting of the center's incorporators at the Lotos Club, 110 West Fifty-seventh Street, the Mayor demonstrated a ready aptitude for the role of the successful producer. On the basis of its original success, he said that the center had "ambitious plans" for the next season but, upon being pressed for specific details, he begged off in the Shubert Alley tradition.

"Oh, you know how producers are," he said.

Mayor La Guardia went on to say that the center's sponsors recognized that in the future risks had to be taken, but that he hoped the city's presentations would get "better and better."

"Never have I seen a group more enthusiastic and willing to work," he said of the center's incorporators. "It has been splendid and I am beholden to say that the center has passed the experimental stage."

Details of Operations

Details of the center's favorable financial condition were provided at the meeting in a report by Joseph M. Cunningham, Deputy City Controller and controller of the center. Total box-office receipts, based on a $1 top for concerts and a $1.50 maximum for plays and musicals, amounted to $371,816 as of April 30.

The center's individual attractions, the length of their engagement and the gross at the box office follow in the order of presentation at the center:

New York Philharmonic Symphony (one concert)	$1,865
"Susan and God" (1 week)	17,677
"The Patriots" (1 week)	14,070
Paul Draper—Larry Adler (8 concerts)	16,017
"Our Town" (3 weeks)	32,183
"Porgy and Bess" (6 weeks)	157,689
City Center Opera (3 weeks)	30,143
City Center Symph'y (4 con.)	5,137
American Ballad Singers (two performances)	1,295
Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo (three weeks)	95,737

The center also received $6,988 in settlement of a contract with the Congress of Industrial Organizations for a musical show entitled "Marching With Johnny," which closed abruptly on the road and never reached the city's house at 124 West Fifty-sixth Street.

Center's Share of Receipts

The center's share of the total box-office receipts amounted to $182,414, the balance going to the attractions. Included in the center's expenses was an item for $26,963, representing administrative expenses and real estate taxes. The city originally took over the old Mecca Temple, site of the center, for unpaid taxes. Subscriptions by the center's underwriters amounted to $31,750, of which the major part remains as a working capital fund.

Harry Friedgut, managing director of the center, reported that the total attendance from the opening night on Dec. 11, 1943, through last Sunday was 346,069. Included in the figure were 46,697 persons who used coupons sold to civic and labor organizations at a 20 per cent discount.

Noting that the center utlimately hoped to reduce its box-office scale, Mr. Friedgut belittled talk that the center competed with commercial theatricals. He held that the center reached "an entirely new audience."

Mr. Friedgut revealed that the center was now negotiating with officials in Hartford, Pittsburgh and Bridgeport for sponsorship in those cities of the Center Opera Company, a move which, if successful, would enable it to recoup production costs.

Newly elected to the center's board of directors were Gertrude Lawrence, Arthur Hopkins, Walter S. Mack Jr., Clarence L. Menser, Thomas I. Parkinson, Rowland Stebbins, Jacob Rosenberg, Mrs. Lawrence Tibbett and Margaret Webster.

Newbold Morris, President of the City Council and chairman of the center board, presided.

New York TIMES
Mar. 12, 1944

A New Audience and a New Theatre

Half the people who flock to the City Center admit they have never before seen a real play.

By John K. Hutchens

FATHER KNICKERBOCKER, an impresario with sundry interests, is in the show business, and his children—by the thousands—appear to be glad of it. To be sure, he is not directly operating the City Center of Music and Drama, Inc., the self-sustaining, non-profit corporation holding forth as the sometime Mecca Temple in West Fifty-fifth Street. He merely set up its organizational structure and appropriated the money to put its home in shape, then left the underwriting and the running of it to others. But no one denies that it exists because the old gentleman's current, and not untheatrical, lieutenant, Fiorello H. La Guardia, has long had something like a City Center in the back of his mind.

Father Knickerbocker's children, it can be reported on excellent authority and eyewitness evidence, like to hear good music, see good plays at reasonable prices. To date they have done so in happy droves, beginning on the night of Dec. 11 last, when 2,692 of them paid $2,016.66, at a scale of $1.10 and down, to hear a concert by the New York Philharmonic. It was two days later, though, when prophets might have seen the handwriting on the Moorish-decorated walls of the big auditorium where the Shriners once sat in convention assembled.

Even by Broadway standards, that first night of the City Center's first play—"Susan and God," with Gertrude Lawrence in her original role and John Golden again producing—was quite an affair, complete with a radio announcer bringing celebrities to a microphone in the lobby. Watching the announcer at his work was Harry Friedgut, managing director of the Center, an energetic gentleman with distinct notions about art for the masses. Mr. Friedgut had an idea.

"Talk to some of these kids coming in," Mr. Friedgut told the announcer. "Ask them if they've ever been in a theatre before."

The announcer asked them, and four out of seven youngsters said no, they had never until now been in a legitimate playhouse, had never seen a play. That, of course, was very un-Broadwayish indeed. Mr. Friedgut and his colleagues in the city's newest quasi-municipal art venture, who know an opportunity when they see one, were delighted to hear this.

STROLLING around the Center of a Saturday night, say, you can believe, as Mr. Friedgut asserts, that the legitimate theatre is something quite new to half the Center's over-all audience. Naturally, this proportion will decline as the patrons return to see subsequent attractions, but just now living performers—in person, not a motion picture, not a voice in a loudspeaker—are a wonderful novelty.

Despite the stories you may have been hearing, it isn't true that people in the audience are so innocent of the theatre that they start to leave after the first act, thinking the show is over. Still, an evening at the Center, or a matinee where the youngsters predominate, will tell you that a new theatregoing generation is in the making.

The curtain of the Saturday night performance you are seeing is at 8:40 o'clock, and at 8:30 all but a hundred or so of the 2,692 seats are occupied. In itself that violates a cardinal rule of Broadway playgoing, which deems a late arrival fashionable, or, at least, nothing to apologize for. But a City Center audience, at the risk of being unsophisticated, wants to see the whole show.

So, for half an hour before the curtain, you stand in the lobby and watch them come in: service men and women; a war worker on the way home, carrying a dinner pail; family groups, among them boys and girls of high school age; young men and women for whom this obviously is a "date"; other men and women, not so young, quietly dressed, but with the same certain festive air about them. Here and there you spot a "name" celebrity, but the great majority are clearly people whose way of life does not include regular playgoing at Broadway prices.

"It looks like a good night," you observe to the young man at the candy counter in the foyer.

"It's good every night," says the young man matter-of-factly.

BEFORE the first curtain there is very little loitering in the lobby, although the lobby is spacious. Like a subway crowd, the audience knows where it is going and proceeds there without losing time. It sits down and waits expectantly with—unless you are quite mistaken—an attitude very far from the commercial, $3.30 theatre patron's challenging "Show me—or else!"

At 8:42, just as the house lights are dimming down, you look over the house and see not more than fifty vacant seats, and these are taken within a few minutes. Only eight holders of orchestra tickets arrive after the curtain has gone up.

From then on, throughout the performance, it is a model audience, very quiet, very attentive, generous with its applause. You have a feeling, as you so often do not in other theatres, that it is here because it is really interested. And at the final curtain instead of rushing for the exits it stays to cheer the performers warmly, as if it felt a certain friendly gratitude not entirely covered by the price of a ticket.

"Es Salamu Aleikum," says an Arabic motto on the wall above the proscenium, a vestige of the Center's Shriner days. "Peace Be Unto You," that means. And, for a fact, the folks out front seem altogether content.

They'll tell you so, if you ask them. On the way up the aisle you talk with a soldier and his girl with whom you had been speaking during an intermission, and you inquire how they liked it. The soldier is from Sand Point, Idaho, and he never saw a play before. His girl says she has spent all her life in New York, but she, too, had never seen a play until tonight.

"It was a little hard to get onto at first," says the soldier

ets are sold in blocks at a 20 per cent discount to unions and other organizations. If the Center can prevent it, no tickets are sold by agencies or speculators.

The point is, it all adds up, thanks to the extraordinary capacity of the Center—and, of course, to the fact that its stage has consistently offered something worth seeing and hearing. The orchestra seats 904; the first balcony, 1,221 (more than the entire capacity of many playhouses); the second balcony, 467.

PROBABLY the Center's remarkable luck won't hold—there are bound to be lean weeks—but at the worst there can be no disaster and the City of New York is financially liable for nothing at all. The city appropriated $60,000 to renovate the building; it would have had to spend the money to make the property usable by any tenant. The appropriation was definitely not a gift, the Center paying the city about $26,000 a year in rent, the equivalent of taxes. (The property, including a nine-story building on Fifty-sixth Street, was acquired by foreclosure of a real-estate tax lien.) Production and operation costs come out of box-office receipts, and failing those, out of $70,000 posted by a variety of underwriters.

By all the rules of civic enterprise in the theatre, life ought to be pretty stormy at the Center. It hasn't been, and this in spite of the fact that the Center is operated by sundry boards comprising representatives of the city, the theatre, labor and various shades of political opinion and social position. The chairman of the program committee is Howard S. Cullman, renowned on Broadway as the "angel" with more hits to his credit than other "angels" care to shake their disappointed checkbooks at. Its selections are passed upon by the board of directors, headed by Newbold Morris, President of the City Council and ex-officio member of the program committee.

"We meet, have lunch and talk it over," says Mr. Cullman. Then the project decided upon, whatever it may be, is got under way. On the word of Mr. Cullman, there has been "not a scintilla of politics" thus far; and, on that of Mr. Friedgut, the cooperation on all fronts has been nothing less than wonderful.

THE Center does not expect to net any large sums, even when playing to capacity. If it had sold every seat for the three operas it has produced it would only have about broken even. At $1.10 top, the City Symphony concerts will merely pay their way. For, apart from production costs, operating charges average $4,000 a week, most of it for rent, heat, light and the salaries of a permanent staff of sixty. The margin of safety is not robust.

This has not prevented a few theatrical managers from grousing bitterly in their Broadway lairs over the take in the City Center's till. It is competition and it isn't fair, they complain, as they did in the days of the Federal Theatre Project, which the Center resembles somewhat as a people's theatre. The more enlightened magnates in the Times Square area have not objected. In fact, they have given the project their blessing. Other theatre people, with a discernment not universal in the entertainment business, also see in the Center a training ground for playgoers who may some day come farther downtown and spend more money.

A "potential audience of 20,000 people a week for the Broadway theatre," Mr. Cullman calls it.

Anyhow, that old, curious theatrical excitement is in the air these days in the big building that runs from Fifty-fifth Street to Fifty-sixth between Sixth and Seventh Avenues: The Stokowski concerts, which started last week; talk of an operetta season to run through the summer; perhaps a City Center repertory company next fall, and a theatre exclusively for children; Helen Hayes, Paul Robeson, Katharine Cornell saying they are interested in playing the Center next season in the plays they are now starring in on Broadway; theatre expatriates in Hollywood saying they, too, want to try the footlights under Center auspices.

AMONG the astonishing things about the Center is the fact that everything happened as quickly as it did. The Mayor announced the project publicly on July 23. A week later the renovating started. On Oct. 4 Mr. Friedgut and his staff moved in. If you remember the old Mecca Temple of the preceding year or two, you know that all this took some doing. The Shriners, who dedicated the Temple in 1924, abandoned it in 1940, whereupon political oratory and lesser prizefights became its principal fare. The grime lay thick upon it, on the big auditorium and in the lodge rooms of the building in Fifty-sixth Street.

Now it is bright as a penny, thanks to that $60,000 appropriation. Sand blasting took the crust of dirt from the exterior of the quondam temple. Cleaners scrubbed the inside till it shone. Fresh paint covered the drab spots. The musty lodge rooms became executive offices, dressing rooms and small auditoriums. There was new red plush for the chairs. Carpets emerged from their dust.

There was money, too, for electrical equipment and new lines for the roomy 45x45 stage. And, when they can get material for it, the new tenants propose to lower the ceiling over the auditorium and do away with the gingerbread fixtures, this by way of bettering the acoustics, which have improved since the Center opened but are still less than perfect.

But Father Knickerbocker's playgoing children are not asking for everything at once. They are seeing shows they like at modest prices, a practice so old-fashioned that it is new again.

A new theatregoing public in the making—An opening night audience at the City Center for music and drama.

The City Center aims to bring art, culture and entertainment to New Yorkers at reasonable prices. Above, a scene from the opera "Martha.